REPORT RESUMES

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POETRY--PART ONE, "A WAY OF SAYING," PART TWO, "SEARCH FOR ORDER." LITERATURE CURRICULUM V, TEACHER AND STUDENT VERSIONS.

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THIS POETRY UNIT FOR 11TH-GRADERS ILLUSTRATES HOW VERSE STRUCTURE AND POETIC TECHNIQUES CONTRIBUTE TO A POEM'S MEANING. IN PART 1, IMAGERY, METAPHOR, SYMBOLISM, IRONY, PARADOX, AND MUSICAL AND RHYTHMICAL SOUND PATTERNS ARE DISCUSSED AS WAYS OF SAYING THE "UNSAYABLE" AND OF REINFORCING THE MEANING AND MOOD OF THE POEM. THE POEMS OF SUCH ARTIST-CRAFTSMEN AS DONNE, HOUSMAN, DICKINSON, AND HOPKINS ARE USED TO CLARIFY THESE POETIC DEVICES. PART 2 IS DESIGNED TO BROADEN STUDENT UNDERSTANDING OF HOW THE SEPARATE POETIC DEVICES WORK TOGETHER WITH THE CONTENT OF THE POEM TO MAKE A WORK OF ART. SOME OF THE LYRIC POEMS OF DONNE AND BLAKE, THE SONNETS OF SHAKESPEARE, AUDEN, AND WORDSWORTH, AND THE DRAMATIC MONOLOGUES OF BROWNING, TENNYSON, AND ELIOT ARE REPRINTED TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH EXPERIENCE IN ANALYZING POETRY. AN EXPLICATION AND INDUCTIVE QUESTIONS ACCOMPANY EACH POEM. TWO TESTS DESIGNED FOR THIS UNIT ARE APPENDED. SEE ALSO ED 010 129 THROUGH ED 010 160, ED 010 803 THROUGH ED 010 832, TE 000 195 THROUGH TE 000 220, AND TE 000 227 THROUGH TE 000 249. (JB)

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OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

POETRY
Part One: "A Way of Saying"
Part Two: "Search for Order"

Literature Curriculum V
Teacher Version

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Poetry - Unit I

This unit is designed to examine the poet's craft in terms of specific poetic devices, such as metaphor, imagery, symbolism, personification, something of what A. E. Housman meant when he said, "Poetry is not a thing said, but a way of saying it." The "way of saying it" may be something we can designate by an appropriate label, such as "simile," or it may be something more subjective and tenuous, such as the repetition of certain sounds, or simply the choice of connotative words.

There is, of course, a danger in approaching poetry armed with a categorical list of devices and expecting that these will lay the poem open to ready dissection. It is important that the student realizes that such terms may describe what is happening in a poem, but that the terminology of poetic devices does not usually represent a set of prerequisites as, for example, the requirements of the sonnet form do. Moreover, in usage, certain terms tend to overlap. A series of images may combine to create a metaphor, and a metaphor which suggests a meaning beyond itself may act as a symbol. For this reason, the following material has been arranged in an order intended to make easy and natural transitions between devices. If the unit becomes merely an enumeration of separate and solitary labels, then it will have failed its purpose.

Although a poem may offer a particularly good example of one device, most poems will illustrate several; cross reference between poems will strengthen the illustrations and give depth to explication in terms of technique.

The unit is especially important in that it can answer a part of the question, why does poetry often seem difficult; or why doesn't the poet simply say what he means? A student should not only be able to identify a metaphor, but to see how it enhances meaning and pleasure in poetry. A discussion of poetic devices is talking about the nature of poetry itself, not merely the decorations on the cake.

Unit I deals with particular poetic devices and offers appropriate examples of each, but again it might be suggested that once a device has been introduced, it is not necessary or even desirable to maintain rigid categories.

Unit II offers a group of poems for more careful and complete study, and an opportunity to apply knowledge of technique discovered in Unit I.

Although the units appear lengthy, we hope they can be made manageable by careful pacing and by allowing, as far as possible, a natural and spontaneous flow of discussion. A suggested time limit will be indicated when it seems appropriate, but you must of course make the final decision about how much time to spend on a poem or problem of poetic technique, basing your decision on your awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of your classes.

UNIT I

The emphasis should always be on "what happens' rather than on what it is "called." Students might begin with a simple poem illustrating several devices and attempt to analyze how the poem works, describing this in their own words, before proceeding to a more formal analysis. "I Heard a Fly Buzz When I Died" by Emily Dickinson illustrates a number of poetic techniques which may be easily apprehended without a formal knowledge of poetic devices. It is simple yet moving, and would probably provoke a response from even the most unsophisticated reader.

Discussion of the poem should allow the student to discover that he is being drawn into an experience with the "I" of the poem. We know that the poem was not written by a dead person, so the first person narrator is a device to bring the experience close, to give it the impact of first-hand observation. The onomatopoeiac word "buzz" lets us hear the persistent, small sound of life, which is contrasted with the "stillness" of the deathbed setting and the final blotting out of light and perception. In the first stanza, life and death appear to be part of a continuous storm, in which dying is a momentary repose. "The king" of stanza two is probably a personification of death. The making of a will in the third stanza might be taken literally, but it is also a statement of resignation to death, in keeping with the sense of repose and waiting throughout. To speak of the "blue. . . buzz" in stanza four brings the fly to life not only as sound but color, something to blend with the visual image of light at the window, an iridescent flicker of color in light before the final darkness. Various rhymes and repeated sounds are used with musical delicacy throughout. The repetition of "see" in the last line gives a suffocating sense of finality.

A good beginning might be simply to ask the students whether or not they like the poem. Unless a student is utterly indifferent, he may dislike the poem for much the same reason that he may like it: that it draws him into an experience almost first-hand.

The rest of Unit I will consist of more specific examination of poetic devices, but the Emily Dickinson poem is a good one to refer back to.

That poetry says what cannot be said, says what can't be said any other way, shows what can't be seen, is rather than tells about, are all concepts which appear in attempted definitions of poetry, and point out the way poetry, through concrete, specific images, may allow us to share more abstract emotions or perceptions of another, the poet. As we experience and understand the world through our senses, so does poetry appeal to our understanding through our senses. For this reason it is appropriate to begin a discussion of poetic devices with imagery.

An image, in its most literal and limited sense, is a representation of something else, such as a sculptured model of a man's head. In discusssing literature, we extend the term to mean a verbal representation which may be visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, gustatory, thermal, kinesthetic; in short, an image may represent an object, person, scene, by recreating it in words which appeal to all or any of our senses.

"Richard Cory"

"Richard Cory" is a fairly simple poem. It depends on contrasted images, in an almost pictorial sense. The initial contrast is between the "clean-favored" Richard Cory who "glittered when he walked" and the "people on the pavement" who observe this fortunate fellow from outside his world while they "worked, and waited for the light." The final picture of Richard Cory, in the privacy of his own home, putting a bullet through his head, provides the concluding contrast. The poem is a little like an editorial cartoon which might be entitled, "Things are not what they seem." There is nothing in the poem to warrant speculation on Richard Cory's motives, nor is that the point of it. Robinson might be saying that things are not always what they seem, or that wealth does not buy happiness, or that unhappiness hides behind appearances, or that one ought not envy those who appear to be more fortunate, or simply that life holds surprises. We could compile a booklet of moral aphorisms based on this poem, and none of them would be really justified. What Robinson does, instead of pointing out some specific message, is create two disparate images of a man which, seen together, shock us and the "people on the pavement" into thoughts in a dozen directions.

Two poems which are good examples of literal imagery used to convey a mood or atmosphere by concrete pictures are "Winter" by Shakespeare, and "The Twa Corbies." "Winter" has been treated at another grade level, but the purpose here is not to examine the poem intensely, but to use it as an example of the use of images which the students will recognize readily. "Winter" is simply a series of sharp, homely images in which "Greasy Joan" and the hooting owl are most central, all of which add up to a feeling of cold, drafts, the wintertime attraction to the kitchen's warmth, early dark in which the owl cries at suppertime, and so on. "The Twa Corbies" is both grim and beautifully melancholy. It skillfully mingles images of life and death, just as the lock of the dead man's golden hair will mingle with the ravens' nest. The final images of white bones and eternal wind create an acute experience of the transient yet beautiful nature of life.

A poem which is comparable to "The Twa Corbies," both in subject and point of view, is Housman's "To An Athlete Dying Young." The images of the Housman poem are, in some ways, less evocative of a particular mood, and yet they are more complex in how they work and what they suggest. The poem is also comparable to Richard Cory, in its use of two jextaposed images of the same man. In showing us the two images of victory and death, with their literal similarity in action, Housman is able to say that a youthful death was a kind of victory for the young man, who will never know the defeat of age and the loss of his powers. The poem may be referred to again, later, in discussing metaphor, as an example of images used metaphorically.

In the preceding poems, the imagery is drawn mainly from the literal happenings of the poems. "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" may serve as an example of external images adapted to the purposes of the poem. In that it uses images to show something about other, unlike things, the poem serves as a natural transition to the discussion of metaphor, simile, and personification, which follows it.

John Donne is said to have written "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" to his wife when she expressed apprehension concerning his journey to France. The tone is one of tender consolation and uses a series of images intended to convey the spiritual, enduring nature of their love, overcoming mere physical separation. The first image is the deathbed of virtuous men, men who part willingly, mildly from things of the earth. Stanza two completes the first image and introduces a didactic note. Let this parting, the poet says, be free from tears and sighs which, in their earthly concern, profane the spiritual. The love that existed between Donne and his wife is likened to the love between men and God, or more specifically between clergymen and God, the laity representing that part of the church hierarchy most removed from the spiritual center, and Donne and his wife being represented as part of the priesthood of spiritual love. The compass image is developed in the last three stanzas to illustrate the paradox of two being one. The circle inscribed by the compass may illustrate the perfection or completeness of true love.

The poem not only illustrates the complex use of images, but also affords opportunity to discuss effectiveness of images. For example, does the opening comparison of their parting to death, albeit a peaceful, spiritual one, really fit in with the idea of the poem, and what sort of comfort would this be in parting? The mixing of imagery may also be open to question. And the final image of the compass may seem rather artificial or even inaccurate. This may lead to the question of why images must seem true or convincing, and why they are sometimes preferable to, or more useful or interesting than, literal statements.

For example, the idea that two separated people are not really apart may not seem to make much sense literally. The compass image embodies the idea in concrete form, in something we can see. As a visual image only, however, the compass image is not too effective. We are bothered a little by the mechanics of the thing, or by the fact that the two points of the compass do not really seem like two separate things, since they are part of the same physical instrument. But the image contains other suggestions which may be more significant. Feelings of circular movement, the movement of one point of the compass being determined by the other (stationary) point, kinesthetic suggestions of pull and leaning together, all work to give a feeling, especially to anyone who has used a compass, of separate points held together and depending on each other. The image probably works better kinesthetically than visually. Similarly, the opening image of the deathbed is inconsistent with the rest of the poem if it suggests that parting is like death. Perhaps we can take it to mean that parting may seem like death. More important, the image suggests that the observers of peaceful death cannot tell when the breath is gone, as the "laity" cannot observe any violent signs of parting when true lovers are separated. It is the sense of breathing, repose, gentle separation, that is more important than the literal meaning of the image. In the sixth stanza, we find that the souls of the separated lovers, "which are one," undergo "an expansion, /Like gold to airy thinness beat." This image seems a bit awkward, for if we try to see the souls in terms of beaten gold, we may get, at best, a picture of an odd sort of immense bridge. Yet the image has suggestions of value, of the glittering of precious material, and of the "airy thinness" of beaten gold, so finely drawn out but durable.

A discussion of the imagery in "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" should soon lead the student to realize that images function in different ways, literally and figuratively, and have different suggestions or connotations. Clearly it is necessary to name more specific or differentiated concepts to stand for the devices of poetry.

Metaphor, Simile, and Personification

Although the images of Donne's poem are both literal and sensory, they also describe by expressed analogy (simile) or implied analogy (metaphor). The poem may be used as a natural transition from a general discussion of imagery to one of the more particular uses of images, simile, metaphor, and personification.

Since students have been dealing with these terms for several years, this section serves primarily as a review. However, emphasis can be given to the fine distinctions between devices and why different ones are appropriate or desirable in different contexts. The question of freshness in images may also be related to this.

Metaphor and simile both work by analogy and, in a sense, may be seen as different degrees of the same thing. Both enable us to see similarities in unlike things. A simile, which says that one thing is like another, maintains the greater distance between the compared things. In a metaphor, the figurative term takes the place of the literal one, or is identified with it. A personification also demands that one term be identified with another, but differs from either a simile or metaphor in that the thing personified is always given human form. A personification may embody abstractions in a human character, or may simply ascribe human emotions, or single human characteristics, to something non-human, be it love, the wind, or a Grecian urn.

The comparisons, in metaphors and similes, drawn between apparently dissimilar things, give the pleasure of discovery and novelty in reading poetry. But such comparisons are also a way in which the poet says the unsayable.

For example, in "The Eagle" Tennyson uses such words as "crooked hands," "like a thunderbolt," to suggest a combination of human and god-like qualities in the eagle; "Close to the sun," "crag," and "Ringed with the azure world" suggest his lofty position; and "The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls" suggests a sort of servitude or obeisance in the rest of nature, beneath him figuratively and literally.

Two other Tennyson poems, "Flower in the Crannied Wall" and "I Envy Not In Any Moods," may illustrate the use of figurative speech to convey abstract or personal ideas about nature and life.

In "Flower in the Crannied Wall" the flower may be literally a flower the poet is seeing. But at this level, there is no reason for the poet's difficulty in understanding "What you are, root and all, and all in all," so we know he means to say something else. The flower comes to represent everything living, even the smallest things hidden away by themselves. The "I" holds the flower, all of it, in his hand, and senses that within the single plant's existence is as much meaning as there is in all of creation. Thus the sustained metaphor of the flower suggests the simplicity and yet mystery of existence. We may hold the entire flower in our hands and yet not know what it means; we exist but never understand why.

"I Envy Not In Any Moods" is more complex in that it builds from the most concrete to the most abstract. The caged bird that has never known freedom is more concrete than "the beast" who lives and acts without conscience or consciousness of acting. And both are more concrete than "The heart that never plighted troth." But all add up metaphorically to the final "Tis better to have loved and lost/Than never to have loved at all," and the rejection of untried existence.

SYMBOLISM

Although image, metaphor, and symbol are similar and sometimes difficult to distinguish, a symbol may be considered as something that means more than what it is. A symbol carries to the reader's mind an image of the concrete reality to which it refers, and that reality suggests something else as well. Perhaps symbolism can best be understood by examples, and introduced by examples from some of the preceding poems.

The sound of the fly in "I Heard a Fly Buzz When I Died" suggests the sound of a living creature, hence the quality of being alive; it may be said to be a symbol of living. We do not feel that Emily Dickinson is saying a fly's buzz is like life; the image does not function the way the personification of "the king" does, nor does the image function metaphorically. Clearly the fly, its buzzing, is life in a very literal sense, but it comes to represent something greater than itself--by its persistence, its small continuous movement and sound, and by its context in the poem, it symbolizes living which goes on when the individual perception of the "I" is gone. Certainly this explication may be questioned. One may prefer to see an identification between the "uncertain, stumbling buzz" and the wavering toward death of the "I", or draw other meanings from the poem. And yet it remains that the buzz of the fly acts primarily as a symbol.

Perhaps the garland on the young man's head in "To An Athlete Dying Young" can be taken as a symbol of youth and excellence in flower. The compass in the Donne poem also acts as a symbol of oneness. The Tennyson poems seem to use the flower, the eagle, and the caged linnet as symbols, though certainly the symbolic equivalent may be ambiguous.

Teaching the three new poems included in this section should not require more than one class period. The selections are simple and require little explication.

IRONY AND PARADOX

Only a very basic understanding of irony and paradox in poetry should be expected of eleventh grade students. Explanation and exercises in the Student Version should be sufficient to teach students what they should know.

You might want to refer to "Richard Cory" as another example of irony, and the oneness of what appears to be two as a use of paradox in the Donne poem. Irony of character is pointed out in Browning's "My Last Duchess," which appears in Poetry Unit II.

Both irony and paradox can be related to the preceding poetic devices in that they are ways of arriving at truths or ideas which cannot be stated as effectively or at all in a direct, literal way.

SOUND IN POETRY

Consideration of sound in poetry should involve about two class periods. Sound is perhaps the most elusive and subjective poetic device. The most conscious poet probably depends more on his "ear" for sounds than on any theoretical basis for use. There are people who insist that all poetry must be read aloud, or at least lip-read, to be experienced fully, although undoubtedly the sound of poetry can be experienced in silent reading.

Sounds in poetry may enhance the sense of the work, they may provide a form or framework, or they may simply give pleasure, as music does. Conventional forms, such as the sonnet, employ a set pattern of end rhyme, and yet even set forms allow for a great deal of freedom in internal rhyme, alliteration, and so on. Modern poetry is notable for its freedom in improvisation of sound patterns. In relating sounds to sense, you may show how certain rhymes or sounds are repeated in key places, or you may simply allow for a subjective response. It is impossible to say why the sound of "o" may take on a mournful association in one context, and a suggestion of exultation in another, and yet in reading we experience that it is so.

Here, too, terminology should be introduced as a means of dealing with a fairly abstract and complex technique, and yet the students should be encouraged to discover that the sounds of poetry can affect their feelings about and enjoyment of a poem, whether or not they know what a certain sort of rhyme is called. You might want to begin by asking the class to read a poem together, if not aloud then lip-reading.

Hopkins' "Spring and Fall: To a Young Child" is rich in rhyme and suggestive sounds. There are some difficulties in the poem, words such as "wanwood leafmeal" and some unusual syntax, but on the whole the sounds of such words are so suggestive that they need no definition. "Goldengrove" for example clearly suggests richly yellowed leaves. The class could read the poem together and then proceed to questions such as, what do you first notice about the sound of the poem, does the sound seem to relate to the meaning, does the sound of the poem help you to feel or understand the meaning, and is the poem pleasant to read? The end rhymes seem to occur in related words, such as grieving, unleaving; older, colder; and sigh, lie, why. Within the lines clusters of similar sounds create a pleasnat, musical effect, and seem to add to the sense or tone of what is being said, though this must naturally be subject to varying opinions.

From general observations, subjective or objective responses, one can move to a more specific determination of the kinds of rhyme and rhyme schemes. This unit deals with various kinds of rhyme: according to position--end and internal; according to number of syllables -- masculine, feminine, triple; and with rhyme schemes, alliteration, assonance, consonance, and onomatopoeia.

Here again this section is self-teaching, and some of it is review. The method of developing the questions follows a modified programmed learning technique. Passages from poems are used rather than whole poems because of the nature of the concepts introduced and because of the limitation of time.

The discussion of assonance (p.26) may need clarification. The underlined or numbered vowels are examples of assonance.

> Here at the small field's ending pause
> Where the chalk wall falls to the foam, and its tall ledges.
> Auden - "Look, Stranger, On This Island Now"

> 1 1 2 3 1
> To feel creep up the curving east
> 3 2
> The earthly chill of dusk and slow
> MacLeish - "You, Andrew Marvell"

> 1 2 1 2
> And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep
> Keats - "Eve of St. Agnes"

In the last passage, students should see that and, an, and azure comprise an example of alliteration. The combination of alliteration and assonance makes this a highly musical line.

Consonance is seen in the following:

> Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
> Nor the furious winter's rages
>
> Shakespeare - "Cymbeline"

Again, it is desirable not only that a student be able to recognize a device, but that he see how consonance, for example, may be used as a sort of design to knit the words together, to give pleasure in repetition, or help establish a mood. A great number of repeated sounds within a line may make the poem very musical and move it forward quickly, or they may simply make it tricky and jingly. An alternation of two sounds repeated and woven together may give the line a musical unity, as patterns of end-rhymes can.

Rhythm and Meter

Rhythm and Meter are also ways in which poetry appeals to us through sound. Rhythm may apply generally to the natural cadence of accented and unaccented sounds in speech. Meter is a more particular term, for it refers to a kind of measurement of this cadence.

A complete study of meter would be highly complex. Different metrical systems have been used by poets: systems based on long and short syllables; systems based on the number of syllables in a line only; systems based on stressed syllables. The last is commonly used in English poetry and will be that considered briefly here, although it may be useful to note that some poets use, for example, regularly ten syllable lines which contain irregular kinds or numbers of feet. Similarly the sensitive reader will detect differences in stressed syllables which cannot be measured accurately by the system here explained, but which do play a part in the sound of poetry. Sometimes two readers will disagree on whether or not a syllable should be stressed, and it is impossible to say which is correct, for there may be different ways in which a line can be read. Students who are perplexed when they cannot work out the meter of a line exactly should be reminded of this.

What will be attempted here is simply to give the students a brief, usable knowledge of scansion and a basic vocabulary for discussion of rhythm and meter in poetry, so that they can see both regularities and irregularities, and something of how a poet uses them effectively.

It would probably be a good idea not to spend too much time on this section of the unit. Too much emphasis might detract from the enjoyment of the poems; and it is true that rhythm and meter in poetry can be enjoyed and do their work without technical analysis.

The Student Version is self-explanatory and includes a list of basic metrical feet and lines.

You may want to review some of the work of this unit at the end. However, unless you feel that your class particularly would benefit from such a review, it is probably not necessary, for Poetry Unit II will provide ample opportunity for review and for an application of the principles learned in this unit to further examples of poetry.

Poetry -- Unit II

This unit will attempt to broaden the student's knowledge of how the total effect of a poem depends on a combination of what is said and how it is said. In Poetry Unit I, the students were led to see how specific poetic devices are used, individually and together, to express ideas or emotions more effectively, concretely, and clearly than they might be expressed through literal statement. In this unit they will be asked to take a closer look at the broad framework of a poem in which these devices are encompassed. There is no exact division between form as individual poetic devices and form as overall pattern in poetry. The discussion of devices in Unit I has already introduced the student to many of the ideas which will be dealt with in Unit II, and this unit should be viewed as an extension, a building on, and a broadening of Unit I, as well as an opportunity to apply, to specific examples, much of what was learned in the earlier Unit.

It is impossible to anticipate all the forms which poetry may take. For this reason, it is insufficient merely to teach the student some conventions of form, such as the characteristics of the Italian and Shakespearean sonnet, and expect that this will prepare him to understand and enjoy all poetry. One may read whole books of modern poetry without encountering a single sonnet. However, the student should be able to see that some of what is true of the relation between form and content in the sonnet is true of other poetry, particularly lyric poetry, as well.

Ideally, a study of conventional forms as well as unconventional forms should provide the experience and background necessary if the student is to go on reading poetry and enjoying it without assistance. He should see that form in itself has little intrinsic value; that a sonnet is not held in high regard simply because the poet has managed to make the rhymes come in the right places and to fill out the lines with the proper number of feet. But he should see, too, that form can give pleasure, that pattern and design can be enjoyable, and that in the best of poems this enjoyable pattern is somehow wedded to the sense of the poem. In all poetry, sonnets, villanelles, or the freest of free verse, the poet must somehow use his form. He does not write unrhymed verse because he has a hard time thinking of rhymes, and he doesn't fill out his lines with iambic pentameter without regard for economy. It is no less difficult to improvise a free pattern, than it is to write a poem within a conventional one.

The sonnet is the most widely represented conventional form in English, although one can find examples of other forms such as the villanelle, the rondeau, or the triolet. For this reason, it is convenient to begin an examination of overall form in poetry with some examples of sonnets. The sonnet itself has been used with great variation, and although the form has a set number of lines, and generally a set rhyme scheme, line length, and organization, it is long enough and free enough to allow for freedom of internal ordering, whether it is a matter of internal rhyme or images.

Then, too, perhaps most of the poetry that students will encounter will be lyrical in some way, for the term, originally referring to something which was sung, has come to apply to almost any imaginative expression of emotion in a poetic or musical way. The sonnet may provide a good beginning for a general consideration of lyric poetry. A study of sonnets gives rise to questions, answers, illustrations, that can meaningfully be applied to other lyric poetry which is not set in the sonnet form.

Most students need assistance in observing lyric poetry; however, it is desirable to maintain a favorable balance between what is shown by the teacher, and what is discovered by the student. That is, the inductive method should allow for spontaneity which should in turn arouse interest and development of critical taste. Whenever possible, for example, similarities and differences in thought and poetic structure between Petrarchan and Shakespearean sonnets should come from the students. On the other hand, it is obviously undesirable to make the students feel that they are being asked to give answers which they cannot confidently supply out of their own experience and the given material. Especially in technical matters it may be desirable to supply some of the information at the beginning. For this may leave needed time free for consideration of how and why the poet uses his form as he does, a broader question and ideally more important than mechanical considerations. You should be able to adjust the balance between what is told and what the students themselves discover according to the abilities and preceptions of your own students.

The following basic characteristics of the Shakespearean and Petrarchan sonnet forms should be made clear to everyone.

1. Both forms require the poet to produce compressed expression within fourteen lines.

2. Both forms demand planned exactness of meter and rhyme.

3. Both forms lend themselves to the development of emotional progression.

4. The Shakespearean rhyme pattern forms three quatrains and a couplet (abab, cdcd, efef, gg).

5. The Petrarchan sonnet develops an eight line rhyme pattern followed by a six line rhyme pattern (abba, abba--the octave--followed by a sestet, some of the patterns of which are cd, cd, cd; cde, cde; or cde, dce.)

6. The different rhyme and stanzaic schemes allow for different organization of thought, feeling, or dramatic possibilities.

Shakespeare's Sonnet 73 is an excellent example of economical development of a theme to a final turn, statement, or resolution, all within a set form. In a controlled series of images, the narrator pictures an emotional response to his realization of aging. The theme is given another dimension by the introduction of a second party, whom the narrator addresses.

A class effort at paraphrasing the lines will bring out the general sense of the work. A brief review of the problem of metaphor should precede an attempt to state the overall idea of the poem, and an examination of the images of the poem in their most literal sense will show how the poem works visually to give a coherent picture as well as a coherent metaphor. That is, the eye moves from "yellow leaves, or none" to the branches which held the leaves, to twilight settling over the picture, sunset, "black night," and finally the picture of coals glowing through ashes, as if a fire is seen faintly in the dark, the last sign of light and life in the deepening night.

The three coordinate quatrains are distinguished not only by their rhyme schemes, but simply by the fact that each is a sentence and an independent statement. That the couplet is set off in the rhyme scheme and as a two line sentence at the end emphasizes its role as a final, summary statement.

Although the metaphors use imagery which makes up a coherent picture, each one is in a sense complete in itself and reiterates the same point; the last day of autumn, the end of the day, or the final embers of a fire all suggest the last, enfeebled moments of something, before the end, when things are merely shadows or embers of what they have been; the old man has used up most of his vitality and sees himself as flickering to extinction.

Students should recognize that the metaphors, despite their common direction, cannot be rearranged without some loss. There is a sort of funneling effect inherent in the poem. A reader moves from the autumn-to-winter metaphor in the first quatrain to a more specific and limited time in the second metaphor: twilight to dark. The third metaphor deals with an even narrower and more ephemeral image, the final embers of a dying fire.

Although the metaphors work with this progression which is visual, timely, and suggestive, Shakespeare makes them even more interesting and meaningful through complication, particularly in the first quatrain. There, the "Bare ruin'd choirs" suggest not only bare branches but also an abandoned cathedral, which in turn suggests the loss of music, activity, life, interest. As a ruined church is merely a useless shell, so is the old man's body, devoid of vitality or purpose. "Death's second self, that seals up all in rest" in the second quatrain personifies death to a certain extent, pictures night as a foreshadowing of death, sleep, and also suggests the sealing of a tomb, which may continue the church or cathedral image. The third quatrain is complicated by the paradoxical line "Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by." That is, as the fire's light is wasted by its burning, so is life, or youth, used up by living.

The images work, then, in several ways; they present a visual progression and give a coherent picture of time passing, light fading, and this in turn reflects a metaphorical progression; the images may also be seen as figurative representations of the speaker himself, picturing him physically in terms of bare branches, fading light; and of course the images also work by suggesting various free associations.

By now the student should perceive, at least in a rudimentary way, how the form of the sonnet reflects the content and how it allows for a progression of ideas and associations, each working independently and also building on the preceding.

Other technical matters contribute to the content. The use of punctuation reinforces thought, particularly in line two where breaking with commas strengthens the feeling of leaves scattering, and the sense of agitation as the narrator faces his own decline. The words "in me" appeared in the first line, but at the beginning of the second and third quatrains the words are shifted to the beginning of the line; this shifts emphasis from the metaphor to the narrator, and seems to intensify the personal tone of the sonnet, in preparation for the final couplet.

The use of connotative words suggesting death grows from quatrain to quatrain, so that "black night" and "ashes" are more sombre and final than "boughs, which shake against the cold." And the occurrence of other death-suggesting words seems to increase as the sonnet progresses.

It is the couplet, its use and meaning, which may offer the most difficult material for discussion. First, it says what it says directly, and in abstract terms rather than images. It gives the impression of making a clear, outright statement. And yet what it says may be much more ambiguous than any of the metaphors in the preceding lines. The couplet gives an added dimension to the poem by focusing on a figure besides the narrator, and yet the relationship of this figure to the narrator and what he says is ambiguous. We may see the addressee as some specific person addressed by the poet, or any reader to whom the statement may apply, or both.

The couplet is set off from the rest of the poem by its position, by its rhyme, by its dependence on statement rather than imagery, and by the use of monosyllabic words, except for "perceiv'st", to give it a steady, emphatic sound. A sense of resolution results.

How the couplet is interpreted may depend on interpretation of the preceding imagery. If the poet expresses a certain amount of self-pity in picturing himself in images of ruin and abandonment, we may see the couplet as a command to cherish the aged man who will soon die. If one chooses to see the images as pictures of strength, beauty, talent, which fades, then the couplet may say that the young man should make the most of his youth while he has it. This latter interpretation may be most plausible in view of the words, "which thou must leave," since one would not usually consider that the young man leaves the old man who dies, but as the young man ages he will leave behind him his youth and all that it offers. Interpreted thus the final couplet becomes not only a reminder to cherish youth, beauty, talent, but also a statement of nostalic regret by the narrator. This interpretation would seem to give the poem more stature than it would have if it were read simply as an expression of self-pity and a possibly petulant command to "love me while I last." On the other hand, the words "makes thy love more strong" require some sort of justification and seem to support the idea that the speaker is telling someone to love him, or at least love some person, rather than love his own youth. One may see a wide range of suggestions in the poem, ranging from the romantic to the austerely philosophical. However the student chooses to interpret, he should be able to support his view within the context of the poem. Certainly he may decide that the poem is incomplete or unsuccessful in its ambiguity, or he may feel that this makes the poem stronger, more universal, or more interesting.

SONNET 65

Shakespeare's Sonnet 65 similarly illustrates the control of an emotional progression within the sonnet form. However, the images in Sonnet 65 move forward in a less obvious way than those in Sonnet 73, and for this reason the form of the sonnet may play a more important part in ordering the subject. Together, these two sonnets should help the student see how progression within a form such as the sonnet, with its parallel quatrains, or any form which uses stanzas of similar form, is not merely a progression forward, from one thing to the next, but a repetition as well. The most obvious and simple repetition is that of the rhyme and meter, but it may be a repetition, in part, of preceding imagery as well. The second quatrain will go through the motions of the first, and may even say much the same thing in a different way, with related imagery, but it goes beyond the first, reinforces it, and builds on it. This repetition provides an enjoyable pattern, and strengthens through parallelism. Such repetition is also a key to understanding what ideas are most central to the poem, for the central ideas will probably be repeated in some way, while less important ideas may serve only to support the central ones.

All the important images in Sonnet 65 are introduced in the first quatrain, and their variation in the following quatrains is what makes the progression. The first twelve lines, consisting of six sentences, five of which are rhetorical questions, convey emotion which ranges from resignation to frustration to overwhelming hopelessness. Finally, in line thirteen, beginning with "unless," there is change of attitude--the appearance of hope. Within each stanza a stage of this emotional progression emerges through the underlying metaphors, word connotations, use of punctuation, and use of rhyme for emphasis.

In stanza one, for example, a series of images connoting strength, durability, size, all subject to mortality expressed in terms of monarchy, are compared to beauty, or a beautiful woman, "no stronger than a flower." The question is asked how can such a frail thing endure when strong things can't. The theme of frail mortality has thus been introduced. It might be well, at this point, to see if the students understand how the theme of a work differs from the specific subject or point of view by asking them to compare this sonnet thematically to the preceding.

In the second quatrain, "summer's honey breath" again suggests the flower-beauty image, and "battering," "rocks," and "gates of steel" recall the images of the first stanza which might be said to represent natural and man-made things of durability or strength. The question "how shall" in the second quatrain is parallel to the simple "shall" in the first, but represents a progression because the speaker is now looking for a means, not simply asking. In the third quatrain, beauty is represented not by a flower but by a more durable image, a jewel, which brings in some of the associations of the earlier images of stone, rocks, brass; but in this quatrain it is not merely a matter of material enduring, but rather of escaping total seizure. "Time's best jewel" pictures beauty, or the woman who may be the subject of the poem, as a product of life, time, and thereby subject to seizure by time. The suggestion is similar to that in the preceding sonnet when the poet says that the flame is consumed by that which nourished it. Time is here personified in such a way as to extend the suggestion, begun in stanza one, of mortality as a powerful monarch, and continued in stanza two where mortality or time is an invader laying siege. In this third quatrain time is a looter, perhaps a conquering monarch repossessing valuables, who takes "his spoil of beauty" in the sense of "spoil" as loot, and in the sense of age wearing out and ruining beauty. In the third quatrain, where, what, and who are asked, to parallel "shall" and "how" of the first two stanzas, but to go even further in looking all ways and finding no answer. To this despairing cry there can be no answer, "oh, none, unless . . ." followed by the turn on the theme which suddenly gives a different dimension or viewpoint to the subject.

The student should see, then, that not only are the quatrains parallel in form, but they also present parallel images, parallel oppositions of strength and frailty, and parallel questions; but that each represents a progression in intensity and a variation on the initial statement of the theme. The couplet not only resolves the questions, but offers a further contrast by saying that what appears to be mortal may find immortality by being written about, "in black ink" the speaker's love is not subject to loss of brightness.

The student should be able to see that the poem is not merely a sonnet, or a lyric poem, because of its technical form, but also because it states, develops, varies, and concludes upon a theme. This concept of thematic progression and variation could certainly be treated in a poem which did not use the sonnet form; however, here the form has been used with grace and economy to support the progression. The rhyme scheme does not only sound pleasing, but also marks off the coordinate quatrains, unifies, emphasizes, and even seems to mark contrasting or parallel words, such as power-flower, days-decays, hid-forbid, and might-bright. And finally, the rhymed couplet not only sounds like a final summing up, but also, because its rhyme sets it apart from the rest of the rhyme scheme, stands out as something which is clearly different from what has been said before it.

Other Shakespearean sonnets which might be used to study the interplay between form and subject are sonnets 18, 29, 55, and 116; each of these develops a single theme, is rich in connotative diction as well as imagery, and presents variation of theme through metaphor, contrast, or comparison.

Sonnet 29 provides an ideal transition to "Lucifer in Starlight" and subsequent Petrarchan sonnets, for the sonnet is Shakespearean in form, that is, in its rhyme scheme, but in organization of content it is Petrarchan. The first eight lines express a thorough sense of insufficiency, presenting images of a man beset with misfortune or indifference wherever he turns, toward men or heaven. The thematic turn begins with "Yet" in line nine, and the last six lines present a man elevated by and fortunate in his love.

A study of the Petrarchan or Italian form should enable students to see comparisons and contrasts between the two sonnet forms. The Petrarchan is perhaps more difficult in its more confining rhyme scheme. Shakespeare allowed himself seven rhyme sounds as opposed to four, or possibly five, in the Italian form. On the other hand, the greater number of divisions in the Shakespearean form may represent a subtler development from one part to the next, whereas the Petrarchan sonnet lends itself particularly to a contrast of two parts.

Consisting of two sections, the octave (first eight lines) and the sestet (last six lines), the Petrarchan sonnet is especially appropriate for certain idea patterns; to question and then to answer; to state and then justify; to complain and then console; or to boast and then to criticize, for example. Subject matter and development may vary within the standard fourteen lines, with the set abba, abba pattern of the octave's rhyme, and variations of rhyme pattern, such as cdcede, cdedec, ccdeed, cdeedc, or cdceed in the sestet.

The octave-sestet arrangement allows, in a sense, for two high points in the sonnet, or two positions of main emphasis; that is, the concluding line in each of the two parts. Line eight may contain the most heightened feeling, statement, or argument of the octave, and line fourteen usually becomes the most comprehensive, heightened, or impressive line of the entire sonnet. George Meredith's "Lucifer in Starlight" illustrates such progression.

"Lucifer in Starlight"

Some background about the story of Lucifer's rebellion against God is necessary before a student can see what Meredith is doing in this poem. As in Milton's Paradise Lost Lucifer should be recognized as pride incarnate, the embodiment of general evil and disorder.

The first five lines show restless Lucifer, tired of reigning in hell and finding little interest in tempting sleeping men. It is a picture of gigantic evil looking for something big enough to attack. Lucifer looks to the universe moving above the earth. Recollections of his earlier conflict with God come to mind as he soars ("pricked his scars"); nevertheless, his "hot fit of pride" moves him on to ignore his memory of the earlier fall, of his "old revolt from Awe," and he reaches a "middle height." But here the sight of the stars overcomes him, for they are "the brain of heaven" and represent an ordered, logical universe which dark chaos and rebellion cannot match. The absoluteness of this infinite and universal order is expressed in lines thirteen and fourteen:

> Around the ancient track marched, rank on rank,
> The army of unalterable law.

Rhythm in this sonnet contributes to the sense of the poem. It is basically iambic pentameter, full of secondary accents, and most of the lines are end-stopped. This emphatic rhythm suggests, the slow, overwhelming power Lucifer manifests. The few internal pauses in the poem occur at strategic points where they give emphasis. Line eleven, for example, has a comma after "height," permitting the reader to pause and prepare for the word "stars," a key word in the poem. Punctuation in line twelve before "he looked" and "sank" causes the reader, and the line, to imitate the pause of Lucifer when he reads the message in the stars, and marks a division between the culminating rise and the ensuing fall. The pause before "rank" in line thirteen creates a powerful emphasis on that word which in turn stresses the finality of the last line, and the word "unalterable." Simply that the final line, although it contains ten syllables, is so much shorter on the page than any of the other ten-syllable lines points out the rhythmic density of that line, where there are no long syllables as those in "Around" or "marched" in line thirteen, to relax the tone of emphatic finality.

Like the first sonnet discussed, "Lucifer in Starlight" progresses in a literal, visual way, and this progression parallels the idea of the poem, of elevation to a sudden drop. Other things about the poem which might be discussed are the continuation of the Prince-monarch-army suggestions, and how they work together; the use of dark and light images; and in connection with this the relation of the title to the whole poem. The name Lucifer, meaning a bearer of light, suggests that we might see various meanings in "Starlight." That is, Lucifer, fallen from his former brightness, is seen only in starlight; and starlight, which he cannot oppose, represents what he once was and has lost.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE

Wordsworth's "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge" demonstrates how the Petrarchan form may shape an uninterrupted, unfolding emotional and poetic reaction, here to a tranquil moment when London and its surroundings become one "mighty heart." A good deal of the poem's overall effect depends upon the manner in which the sonnet form frames the vision in the morning sun:

(4) This city now doth like a garment wear
(5) The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
....
(8) All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.

The speaker draws himself into the experience by inference in lines two and three, and again in line eleven he gives the experience depth by placing himself in the scene as receptor. "Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!"

Speaker, city, and nature are all in tune at the moment of the poem. The sleeping city as seen in the morning sun suggests tranquil innocence, which it shares with "valley, rock, or hill." Even the Thames River, the only thing moving, is simply following nature "at his own sweet will."

In the third and fourth lines Wordsworth manifests some surprise that a city could possibly appear so inspiring. And again in lines nine and ten he realizes that he has been accustomed to thinking and stating that only valleys, rocks, and hills are ever beautiful in the way the city now appears. Lakes, deep groves, rustic cottages, were his usual subject.

Silence is the first thing that impresses him about the city. "Touching in its majesty" in line three is an unusually good combination well placed. The "ch" and the "j" create a rich sound suggesting that something important is to follow. The pace increases as line four runs into line five where the reader's attention is momentarily directed to "morning," "silent," "bare" before he is drawn into the city, possibly later in the day, with all its energies bent towards exclusively human endeavors. But lines seven and eight remind us that at the moment it is affiliated with natural things; the world is tranquil, harmonious, sleeping. The insistent rhyme repetitions (cd, cd, cd) tend to rush the total excitement of the experience to a fuller realization that: "All that mighty heart is lying still."

There is no need to spend a great deal of time on this sonnet, for it offers little difficulty or opportunity for interpretation, and operates primarily at the level of description. Although it hints at a contrast between the way the city usually is, and the way it is suddenly revealed here, at sunrise, and perhaps too a customary discordance between the city and nature, this is as far as the idea need be pursued. In a sense, this sonnet might serve as an example of how form can be enjoyable in poetry without meaning a great deal, for the poem is certainly pleasant to read, and contains as well some lovely images and word combinations, such as "All bright and glittering in the smokeless air." However, it does not offer opportunity for as complex or intense explication as the preceding sonnets.

The End of the World (p. 550, Immortal Poems)

The preceding sonnets have been fairly regular in their use of the sonnet form and the development of content. "The End of the World" by Archibald MacLeish uses the form, and to a certain extent the idea of a development or progression marked by the divisions and rhymes of the form. However, the Auden sonnet depends more on an accumulation of images than of ideas, and depends on contrast of images for its final effect. This poem should serve as a good antidote for the student who may have begun to think of the sonnet as a purely meditative poem, or a poem necessarily cast in elevated language, or even, as in "Lucifer in Starlight," primarily a development of abstract ideas made concrete. For in this poem, although we know the ideas behind it, the images, the picture itself, are what is emphasized.

The sonnet is Shakespearean in its rhyme scheme and yet, like Shakespeare's sonnet 29, the break or turn occurs between lines eight and nine. The first two quatrains give a picture of various, bizarre circus-like figures, none of which seem to have any symbolic or metaphorical suggestion individually, but which, altogether, suggest activity which is both patterned and yet somehow chaotic, meaningful seen within the circus performance, but apparently senseless when looked upon from without, familiar in that we seem to be able to identify this as a circus, but abnormal, exaggerated and strange.

Like the swinging trapezist, Teeny, everything seems suspended and about to happen; and then "the top blew off." It remains for the next six lines to make the preceding lines meaningful, for here we see not the performers but the audience as well. The poem works as a metaphor for life, going on like a circus under the big top, and suddently disappearing into blackness not at any orderly, appointed time at the end of the show, but right in the middle of everything. And then there was "nothing at all." The contrast between the specific actors and the activity of the first eight lines, and the blank "nothing" of the last six lines, as well as the contrast between "white faces, those dazed eyes" and the images of darkness in the last six lines, give a strong image of life suddenly obliterated in the midst of its active performance. The "white faces, those dazed eyes," seem not to be so much anyone left in the darkness, but rather the brief after-image the eye sees for an instant after the light goes out.

Although the rhyme is regular, the meter is not. Although most of the lines have ten or eleven syllables, the stresses are highly irregular and are manipulated to control the speed and cadence of the lines, depending on what is being said. It is also interesting to note that the entire poem is really one sentence, varied and controlled by punctuation, line endings, and a careful structure of parallels, ranging from the parallel of the first eight lines, ended by a colon, to the last six, to parallels as simple as the repetition of "nothing" in the last line.

"Sonnet to My Mother" (p. 601, Immortal Poems)

Another sonnet which makes an unconventional use of the form is George Barker's "Sonnet to My Mother." The fourteen lines of the poem are divided into octave and sestet, but the rhyme and meter and only approximately Petrarchan, which is as much as to say that it is not Petrarchan at all but does in part suggest that pattern. Lines four and eight rhyme, for example, but do not rhyme with the first line, and "her" in line two is only approximately rhymed with "laughter" and "after", and is picked up again in the words "cellar" and "her" in the sestet. Barker has used consonants to a greater extent than vowels in his rhymes, so that eight of the lines end with r-sounds, four with nd-sounds, and the remaining two end with alliterative, two-syllable words, "mountain" and "morning" which also pick up the end sounds of the other lines. The total effect is a relaxed, musical quality, in which sound gives unity and emphasis as exact rhymes do, but is perhaps closer to the sound of natural, unrhymed speech. This is one way in which Barker has used tradition or convention but has also escaped some of its limitations.

Barker has also used techniques of contrast and parallelism, particularly effective in that he constructs a sort of interlocking series of rising images. She is "most far" and yet "most near," and "under the window," which contrasts in its domestic connotation with "huge as Asia, seismic with laughter." The following line returns again to the very "near" picture of a real woman, but this time we see her on a monumental scale. "Irresistible as Rabelais," she has the stature of a literary figure, and surrounded by "lame dogs and hurt birds" she is almost Franciscan, a symbol of compassion and tenderness. This is followed by the image of the woman who is not only like a continent, with a laugh like an earthquake, but so great that she is a "procession" near which other creatures seem "like a little dog following a brass band." All the images of the woman, be they earthquake, Rabelais, or "her Irish hand," have strong connotations of a gusty, earthy life, and of a warm solidity. In these first eight lines Barker has established his mother's monumental tenderness, her sense of life, her almost mythic proportions coupled with the very real, almost bawdy woman with "gin and chicken" in her hand.

The last six lines introduce a new, more sombre note into the picture, that of war. It is this portion of the poem which raises the sonnet above the scale of mere picture, or description of the poet's mother, warm and engaging as that picture is, and gives it universal significance. For here, his mother will not abandon the joy and order of her life to run in the face of war. She comes to symbolize the best things in humanity which hold out against war's chaos and destruction. She is more than a mother, a woman, holding on at the edge of her dining room table; she is domestic order, love, maternal and human compassion, and laughter. Her faith is in these things, not in the war, and so "like a mountain/ whom only faith can move" she sticks with the things she does believe in.

It is to this picture that the speaker addresses his love and his final hope "That she will move from mourning into morning." This final play on the words introduces the only specific suggestion in the poem that the woman is not blind to the war, that her solidity is not mere inertia, and that she suffers on account of it; but this single suggestion is sufficient. The sonnet is an excellent example of controlled, progressive statement, visual, figurative, each new image building on the ones before and all culminating in the final statement of faith and optimism.

The variety of these examples should give the student a good idea of how form in poetry can be used by the poet, and is not merely convention. Certainly the sonnet pattern is somewhat arbitrary, but through use it has become a form that seems to have a certain coherence in itself. Stanzaic divisions, rhyme units, parallel portions of a poem, the use of contrast, are all seen in the sonnet. The following three poems also demonstrate some or all of these characteristics but are not sonnets. The students should examine these poems individually, but also compare and contrast them to the use of form in the preceding sonnets.

"Song" John Donne (p. 80, Immortal Poems)

Donne's "Song" uses three stanzas, each of which, separately, might be compared to the divisions of a sonnet, and each of which also represents a progression depending on the other two. The poem is relatively simple, light, and musical.

The first stanza addresses someone, or anyone, the reader most likely, with a series of puzzling tasks, mysteries, that progress from the whimsical "Go and catch a falling star", to the more human problem of how not to feel envy, and ends with three rhymed lines that ask simply how or why honesty grows or can be found. Because the initial examples seemingly have no answer, we infer that Donne is saying the same thing about "an honest mind."

The second stanza sends the addressee on an impossible, eternal search for "strange sights" and says that whatever one finds he will not find "a woman true and fair." What Donne is saying is that beautiful women cannot also be of "an honest mind."

In the last stanza he says "If thou find'st one, let me know"; but then, in a tone of whimsical cynicism says he wouldn't go to her because by the time he reached her she would be "False. . .to two or three." Each stanza develops a series of progressive images, much as a sonnet might, and gives the stanza its final turn in the three rhyming last lines, much as a couplet might. The rhymes help to give the poem its light, musical sound, and two rhyming two-syllable lines not only emphasize the parallel statements but also serve much like a sung, musical refrain, although the words themselves are not repeated. There is a regular correspondence in the number of syllables in parallel lines in the stanzas; the fifth and sixth lines of each stanza contain an extra syllable which slows the line, in preparation for the next, short, swinging lines and final line. The students should see that form in this poem contributes greatly to the pleasant musical quality, to the lightness of a statement which, said differently, might sound rather sour, and to the parallel progression of the ideas.

Upon Julia's Clothes Herrick (p. 97, Immortal Poems)

This poem serves as a simple example of the use of three rhymed lines to produce a musical, and yet succinct effect. It is enought to point out that the two stanzas are parallel, the first showing how the speaker thinks of Julia, her grace and beauty, and the second, showing how the actual sight of her "glittering" enraptures him. Each stanza is a complete sentence. Each sentence states the theme in a different way; the second represents a progression upon the first. The three rhymed lines, and the rhyme sounds themselves, reinforce the images of liquid motion and light.

The Tiger Blake (p. 234, Immortal Poems)

The rhymed couplet and the four-line stanza appear frequently, but with great variation in their use. The lines may be run-on, or end-stopped. The units of meaning may be contained primarily within the couplets, or in the entire stanza, or the form may be simply used to give an agreeable pattern to a poem which is generally continuous in thought, that is, which does not readily break into divisions in the subject.

Blake's "The Tiger," however, makes a very obvious use of the rhymes and stanzas. Each stanza is a variation of the theme of "fearful symmetry," or the idea of dark, possibly evil designs in nature, as well as good or harmless ones, such as the lamb. The rhythm as well as the rhyme is distinct, emphatic, the lines comparatively short with a high number of stresses. The overall effect is tense, sharp, and itself symmetrical. Each stanza asks a question, and the repetition of the first stanza at the end not only rounds off the sound of the poem but ends with the emphasis on the enigmatic nature of the question asked.

The poem is not only a question about the tiger, but about the nature of its creator, who would create a universe of designs which seem to be both good and evil, pleasant and frightening. For, unlike Lucifer in the Meredith poem, the tiger does not represent chaos, or even darkness; it burns "bright" in darkness, and we sense a hellish kind of beauty in the creature.

This poem might well be compared in form, and in the relation of form to content, to the preceding one by Herrick, where rhyme and stanza form seem to have a softening effect, rather than creating tension as they do here.

You might wish to look, also, at "Spring and Fall: To a Young Child" considered in Unit I, and to compare the development of the poem to some of the sonnets in this unit, and to consider also what effect the use of rhymed couplets has.

There are, of course, numerous conventional patterns which might be dealt with here; however, it is hoped that this approach to the general idea of form or pattern in poetry will equip the student to see what is being done in other poems he encounters, whether or not he knows the name of the form, or whether or not the poem has a named form. The student should be aware, by now, that the stanza, the line, the rhyme scheme or lack of it are all elements of pattern which are available for the poet's use, and that the use of stanzaic units, quatrains, couplets, or irregular stanzas, or any other, is particularly useful for marking divisions in thought, establishing parallels or contrasts, and creating a marked progression in the poem.

Some poems, however, are constructed in continuous form. Either they do not break into stanzas at all, or do so simply as it seems natural to whatever is being said.

"My Last Duchess" Browning (p. 402, Immortal Poems)

"My Last Duchess" is such a poem, in continuous form, and in addition it is a dramatic monologue, demonstrating the particular demands of that sort of poem. In a dramatic monologue, a single speaker talks to one or more listeners. The poet must include the setting, the time, and all relevant antecedent action in such a way that the reader is not distracted from the real business of the speaker. The character of the speaker and any others involved must be clearly and believably portrayed. All this must be done in a short time if the monologue is to be effective.

In "My Last Duchess," Robert Browning's famous dramatic monologue, the speaker is the Duke of Ferrara. The subject of his remarks is his "last duchess," but the object of his comments is his bride to be, the daughter of a neighboring count. The Duke's listener, an emissary of the count, has evidently completed arrangements for the approaching marriage; and now he and the Duke, having left their conference room pause before the portrait of the last Duchess.

The word last in the title is revealing. Undoubtedly the Duke has had another duchess, perhaps several others; and he has just completed negotiations for yet another. His monologue is really intended as a sharp, clear warning to the partner of his approaching marriage. Irony of character is seen in the kind of man the Duke would like to appear and the kind of man he shows himself to be. The Duke sees himself as a cultured aristocrat justified in freeing himself of a naive, undisciplined, young wife. The reader sees the Duke as he is: a cold, arrogant, devious, observing, suspicious, tyrannical husband who chose "never to stoop."

Beginning with his supercilious tribute to Fra Pandolf, the Duke describes his former Duchess very thoroughly. A joyous, charming woman, loved by everyone, emerges from the Duke's words. But there is a double edge to everything he says. When he says "I call/That piece a wonder, now" he is saying that the image is remarkably lifelike, but the "now" added as if in afterthought indicates that he probably, in his jealousy, was not so happy with the painting at the time it was being painted, for "Sir, 'twas not/Her husband's presence only, called that spot/Of joy into the Duchess' cheek." Then too, the Duke shows an abnormal sensitivity about what strangers think when they see the picture; he feels that they are seeing something of his former wife's look which is betraying him. Her great weakness seems to have been her failure to know the Duke for what he was. She was perhaps unaware of the significance of his close observation, or the depth and possible consequences of his displeasure, his jealousy, his resentment. In what he says, the Duke reveals as much about himself as about the former Duchess.

The usual interpretation of this famous poem sees the Duke as having ordered his Duchess put to death. (". . . I gave command; Then all smiles stopped together. . .") The Duke of Ferrara should be viewed as a contemporary of the Borgias, in a time when the lord of the household had the power of life and death over the members of his household. Someone once asked Browning himself if the Duke had commanded that the Duchess be murdered. He thought for a while and said that the commands were that she be put to death and then added that he may have shut her up in a convent. Had the Duke really loved his last Duchess? Did he love her still? Why did he reserve for himself the pulling of the curtain that covered the portrait? Why does he feel compelled to tell strangers about her? The early portion of the poem indicates that this was a regular occurrence. Does he seem like a guilt-tormented man, or is he simply moved, still, by a nagging, unsatisfied jealousy? The students may want to explore all these possibilities or others, but they should be careful to look for support for their ideas within the context of the poem, for part of the success of a dramatic monologue depends on how successfully the poet supplies all the necessary information for understanding, without making it seem obtrusive or awkward.

The reader may wonder, also, whether the stop before the painting of the Duchess was simply part of an art tour with the pause before Neptune a continuation of the tour. Certainly this might be a fitting situation for the Duke to display some of his treasures. Ironically, whether he intends to or not, he is also displaying his own nature. Before the poem opens, the speaker and listener were discussing the proposed wedding and how much dowry the Count would provide. The lines about the dowry come near the end of the poem, beginning with the words, "I repeat." It does not seem likely that this is a deliberately planned stop before the portrait; more likely it may be a coincidence which the Duke takes advantage of.

Another question might occur to the reader. Why didn't the poem end with the Duke and emissary descending the stairs after viewing the portrait? What was the significance of the reference of Neptune's taming a sea-horse? Some critics make a parallel between the Duke and Neptune; the Duke tamed a wife as Neptune tamed a sea-horse. But the Duke did not really tame his wife; he simply removed her. Other critics say that the bronze statue and the portrait were equally interesting as art forms, and the Duke was playing the role of the connoisseur of art. That he reveals himself and his relations with his former Duchess is perhaps due to the poet's intentions rather than the Duke's. Or perhaps the Duke had simply finished what he had to say and then used a natural device to end the subject, referring to the next thing that caught his attention.

The characteristics of the dramatic monologue, the skillful use of imagery, and the use of rhyme constitute the chief aspects of form for students to consider. Only the latter requires brief discussion here. The lack of correspondence between thought units and rhyme creates an interesting effect. By ending thought units within the line, the rhymes appear in mid-sentence and create a tension similar to that in contrapuntal music in which a melody is accompanied by one or more related but independent melodies. In the poem, the thought is like one melody; the rhymes, like another. Lines one and two illustrate this. The meter of the iambic pentameter lines supplies a basic regularity so that the rhymes occur at regular intervals and become an effective structural device. The rhyme itself is less pronounced than in poems where the thought unit and the rhymes correspond. Students should identify the rhymes as predominantly masculine end rhymes.

"Ulysses" Tennyson (Immortal Poems, p. 375)

"Ulysses" is another example of continuous form and of the dramatic monologue. Because of the poem's length, you may not wish to treat it completely; it is, however, useful for the student to see more than one example of a form. Adjust the amount of time given this poem according to your own class and class schedule.

Tennyson follows the story of Ulysses as narrated in Dante's Inferno, Canto 26, lines 90-142. Dante carried the fate of the Greek warrior beyond the Homeric picture of an aging hero content with domestic quiet. Dante's Ulysses and likewise Tennyson's is unwilling to leave the life of the adventurer, but seeks, rather, to "drink/ Life to the lees." The narrative is direct, uncomplicated. Ulysses considers his role as an "idle king" and determines "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." Love for Penelope and Telemachus does not dissuade him--not because his feelings for home and family have dimmed, but (because he is more than a wanderer) directed by capricious wanderlust. Tennyson's Ulysses is more philosopher than adventurer, as the central metaphor indicates: "Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough/Gleams that untraveled world whose margin fades/Forever and forever when I move." The hero's dream is "To follow knowledge like a sinking star, /Beyond the utmost bound of human thought." Self-realization and self-fulfillment (his "newer world") appear as more worthy goals than domestic bliss and a submissive kingdom. In one sense, then, this poem is about man's perpetual journey in search of knowledge. Having seen much of life, Ulysses is made more eager to live, not one life, but many: "Life piled on life/ Were all too little."

The subject of the poem is more complex than the high school student might first perceive. In seventy lines, Tennyson presents a surprisingly complete picture of Ulysses the adventurer, the leader of men, the philosopher, the husband and father, the aging king, and, perhaps, even the seeker of immortality.

Form

The dramatic monologue proves a useful vehicle for Tennyson's poem, allowing as it does for one character to speak to identifiable but silent listeners, thereby providing a deep insight into the character of the speaker. Attention focuses on the speaker so completely that a flash of surprise follows his address to the mariners. The dramatic monologue allows the listeners to be completely outside, as in Browning's "My Last Duchess," but here the choice of words and the content compel the mariners to become participants. Indeed, these mariners, "souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought with me," have been so intimately connected with Ulysses that his final journey would be inconceivable without them.

Structure

The poem has three divisions which the subject matter suggests. Lines 1-32 explain the situation Ulysses finds himself in and reveal his philosophy. The king is seen here as a spokesman for a philosophical point of view, and the projection of this view becomes the important part of the poem. Lines 33-43 mark the king's abdication and the bequeathing of his power to his son Telemachus. Use of contrast is effective here: The reader learns about Ulysses from what he has to say about his son. Lines 44-70 conclude the poem, but introduce a new life for Ulysses and his mariners.

Diction

Word choice advances each division. "Idle king," "barren crags," "aged wife," "dim sea" convey the king's feeling of futility. As he reviews past experience, the reader feels the hero's growing vigor resulting from the determination not to remain an "idle king." An essentially youthful person speaks: "How dull it is to pause, to make an end/To rust unburnished, not to shine in use! /As though to breathe were life!" Such lines force a quickening of the pulse because of content as well as structure. The series of one-syllable verbs in the infinitive form requires rapid reading. When Ulysses introduces Telemachus, the lines become more solemn and more tender. The pace is slow, deliberate, almost meditative because of the formal tone of the introduction, the lack of word order inversions natural to poetry, and the use of words whose meaning and length demand a slow reading is apparent in: "This is my son, my own Telemachus, /To whom I leave the scepter and the isle - /Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfill/This labour." The reader senses the paternal love, but realizes that the king's abdication of scepter and isle includes his wife and son. The words used in the last thirty-six lines present an interesting combination of sight and sound. The sunset is there, and the movement of the line and the sound of the long vowels combined with the same consonant help make clear the king's feeling as he closes this phase of his life: "The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep/Moans round with many voices." Form and subject harmonize. Tennyson's control of speed and movement of the lines is especially apparent here. Lines 55-56 are slowed down by the use of three spondaic feet (accented syllables force slower movement), by the use of long vowels or diphthongs in accented syllables, and by two grammatical pauses after wanes and climbs.

But the dawn of a new life is the important issue in "Ulysses," not the sunset of an old one: "'Tis not too late to seek a newer world, /. . . One equal temper of heroic hearts, /Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will/To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." The last line presents an interesting blending of form and subject. The regularity of the exact iambic pentameter is enhanced by the use of monosyllabic words. The unaccented words are unimportant; the accented are all verbs plus not. The grammatical pause after each accented verb adds its own strength to the final line which beats with the determination and dedication of Ulysses.

Metaphor is strong in the poem. Experience is an arch which leads the traveler from one life to another. The journey is a search for knowledge, not just a voyage to another land. A paradox as well as a metaphor is apparent in "Yet all experience is an arch where through/ Gleams that untraveled world whose margin fades/Forever and forever when I move." An increase in knowledge opens new avenues and reveals further ignorance. Metonymy (Thrall, Hibbard, Holman define as "A common figure of speech which is characterized by the substitution of a term naming an object closely associated with the word in mind for the word itself") is seen in several lines: "For some three suns to store and hoard myself," and "To whom I leave the scepter and the isle."

A complete treatment of "Ulysses" at the eleventh grade level requires more attention than can rightfully be expected. Over-analysis at this level may endanger appreciation. A reasonable expectation includes students' recognition of the subject as an account of an anticipated, literal journey and as a metaphorical journey in which knowledge is the destination and the adventurer is the scholar. Aspects of form should include a discussion of the particular type of lyric Tennyson employed, the general structure, and the use of metaphor and metonymy.

"The Hollow Men," T. S. Eliot (p. 539, Immortal Poems)

Eliot's "The Hollow Men" makes us conscious of the poem as a voiced commentary, but unlike a dramatic monologue, the speakers seem to change from one section of the poem to another, and are less distinct than the speakers of either of the two preceding poems.

This twentieth century poem illustrates a controlled use and variation of form, both conventional and freely improvised. Eliot's use of stanzaic breaks, punctuation, rhyme, and line breaks seems always to support the statement of the poem or the subject. All these elements also contribute greatly to the pleasure of the poem, so that the interweaving of sound and sense seems, at times, unbelievably skillful. A careful study of Eliot's technique may serve to convince the student who is still doubtful that a poet can use his technique so consciously, or who may feel that a poet creates rhymes because they sound nice, and that it is the critic or reader who imposes an interpretation on that use.

A certain difficulty in stating just what is happening in the poem, in literal terms, may cause the student to feel that the poem is more difficult to apprehend than it really is. For this reason, it may be well to suggest that the student approach the poem first as an emotional experience created in terms of images which, although they sometimes make peculiar spatial or logical leaps, develop continuously in their emotional connotations.

The most important elements of overall form to look at here are those of divisions, into lines, stanzas, and sections, and those of repetition, of sounds, images, words, phrases. In addition the student will want to identify the progressive character of the speaker or speakers, and the setting as it changes from one section to the next.

There is a great deal of referential material in the poem, ranging from the opening epigraphs to the lines from the Lord's Prayer in section five. Only the most obvious of these references need be mentioned here, for a complete analysis of Eliot's use of sources and references would probably only confuse the eleventh grade student. "The Hollow Men" themselves, for example, have been cited as reference to at least two other works, but the image of hollow men is suggestive enough in itself to be understood without reference. The students should recognize, however, such borrowings as the words and rhythm of "Here we go round the mulberry bush" and "This is the way we go to church" in section five, and should understand how such reference can add to the meaning of this poem.

The "hollow men" of the first section speak in chorus, announce themselves and the subject of the poem, and comment upon their own actions, or lack of them. Section two presents an "I" who seems to speak for the "hollow men" in a more personal, subjective mood than in the first section. Section three fuses the mood of both in "a dead man's hand" and "we are/Trembling with tenderness." Section four returns to "we" but the speakers are indistinct, seen only as a community of blind men, and it is the valley of the shadow and its landscape which predominate. In section five the speakers have degenerated to mere gesture, disembodied ritual, with no true existence.

Similarly the landscape of the poem becomes more and more arid, desolate, deathlike, with each section.

The first section gives us no garden, and yet there is grass, wind, and some hint of life, however decayed, in the "rats' feet over broken glass/In our dry cellar." Section two contains sunlight, a tree, wind, and a field. There is the illusion of life here but the scene is one of abandonment and ruin. The landscape of section three is desert, stone, and cactus--an arid landscape whose only fruit is thorns. In section four the desert is seen as a darkening valley, a place of death, "This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms." The speakers are blind forms which "grope together" and the river is not life-giving water but a swollen, unwholesome barrier. Section five gives us a cactus, a "prickly pear," symbolic fruit of aridity which becomes the center of the dance of meaningless ritual.

Besides the progression in the character of speakers and landscape from one section to the next, each section has a strong central image as the vehicle for that progression. In section one, it is the image of the scarecrow that introduces the theme of living death, or spiritual aridity. These speaking scarecrows are hollow, but not empty; they have the appearance of fullness but they are stuffed with straw. They seem to speak but their whispers are the meaningless sound of wind moving dry grass. They seem to move but again they are moved by the wind, not by self-will. The students should discuss the differences between the contrasted words in stanza two of this first section. When is shape formless? How can shade be without color? They should see that there is an element of intentional action in each of the words "form," "colour," and "motion." Likewise, there are connotations of accident, of the undefined and fragmentary, in "shape," "gesture," and "shade." A gesture is only a hint of a motion, or something made for appearance only. The students will need to see the fine line being drawn between appearance and reality in these first two stanzas to understand the third. These men have the appearance of life but they are not really alive. They also have the appearance of death, but are not dead "as lost/Violent souls" are. They are neither dead nor damned, for either would have required some sort of antecedent life and wilful action.

Section two continues the image of eyes introduced in "direct eyes" in the preceding section. Eliot's use of this image illustrates his skillful merging of images which change associations in context. The eyes stand for perception, but they also stand for a confrontation with life and reality. Later, in section four, the image of the eyes blends with that of the star, and both with the "Multifoliate rose" suggestive of fertile life and also of spiritual life symbolized perhaps in a rose window of a church.

The first section stated that "We are the hollow men" and the second begins to answer why. The hollow men "dare not" look into "direct eyes." The disguise or illusion motif is also continued here. The second stanza of this section is a prayer not to have to live or act. It is a prayer to exist in illusion, as a scarecrow does, moved not by self but by the wind. It is fear of a confrontation with life that frustrates the will to live. The last two lines of the section punctuate the statement as the speaker asks to be spared this confrontation with reality, action, real life or death.

The central image of section three is one of religious worship. It is seen both in the "dead man's hand" raised to "the stone images," and the frustrated impulse toward physical love. The question posed in stanza two of this section is weighted by apathy. This would be pathetic if the speaker did not seem so utterly drugged, devitalized. He asks "Is it like this/In death's other kingdom" and describes the desert condition of the hollow men, stirred by desire but alone, mouthing empty prayers. The spiritually dead cannot know what it is like to be anything else. They sense only an obscure need, an emptiness unsatisfied.

But "There are no eyes here." In section four we see this is a desert valley of the blind. The fading star is also the fading sight of the perceiver.

Section five contains the empty ritual dance, the fragmented prayer, and the series of images of positive impulses frustrated. There may be some difficulty in showing the students why Eliot is not being irreverent or merely flippant in coupling the Lord's Prayer with "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush." For example, an inexperienced and careless reader might miss the positive elements in the poem, and the condemnation of spiritual aridity inherent in the images, and read this last section as some sort of satire on religious ritual per se. Students should discuss the meaning of the repeated line, "Falls the Shadow." Critics have seen various references in "the Shadow" but here it is sufficient to interpret it as the shadow of fear. What, for example, might Eliot be saying about religious ritual which is practiced out of fear of death?

The hollow men experience desire which is both physical, "Trembling with tenderness," and spiritual, "the perpetual star/Multifoliate rose/Of death's twilight kingdom/The hope only/Of empty men." But because they fear to commit themselves to either, "the world ends/Not with a bang but a whimper."

At this point students should have a good idea of how Eliot has used the section and stanzaic divisions of the poem. Line divisions and punctuation also play an important part in the overall structure. For example, in section one the lines are broken and certain sounds are repeated to convey a sense of mechanical recitation. The sing-song of the lines takes any real feeling out of the exclamation, "Alas!" The unnatural break of line five at "when" rhyming with "men," and the sounds of "meaningless," "grass," and "glass" all contribute to this mechanical, sing-song quality. The two slow unrhymed lines ("Shape without form,") seem to punctuate, freeze, and take the color out of the scarecrow image of the first stanza. Students should notice that Eliot freely alters conventional punctuation when it suits his need. For example, he frequently omits commas where a line ending serves as well. This light punctuation allows the words and lines to control the cadence of the poem. Line endings are felt as pauses and yet the whole thing is run together as a set speech by machines, something memorized but not felt.

Eliot uses rhyme to reinforce this unemotional mood of sing-song recitation, and also to unify and set off. In the first stanza of section two, for example, the widely spaced "are" (line 4) and "star" pull the stanza together and also set off the vision of illusions. The repetition of words or phrases is another device Eliot uses to reinforce the mood of the poem, and such repetitions also often point out subtle distinctions of meaning, as in section four in the first two lines: "The eyes are not here/There are no eyes here" might seem at first to be a repetition of the same idea, and yet the first line refers back to "direct eyes" and "Eyes I dare not meet in dreams," and the second line refers to the condition of the hollow men themselves.

If the students seem to find it difficult to accept the statement of the poem as an abstraction rendered in images of life frustrated by fear, let them discuss how this idea might be applied to concrete examples in life. One example has already been mentioned, in relation to the practice of religion out of fear. In what other ways does fear frustrate real existence? Eliot is saying that it is not enough simply to exist, to be "Shape without form." One must act consciously and positively, not moved by fear or by external motions as the scarecrow is moved by the wind. This is only a very general statement of the subject of the poem. There is certainly room for individual interpretation and more specific interpretations might be drawn from discussion of the various images. Why, for example, does Eliot introduce the idea of hope where he does in section four, stanza three? The students should be able to enjoy the poem with just a little discussion of what it is all about, and yet they should see too that an intensive study of the poem will enrich that enjoyment without, in any way, exhausting the poem.

NOTE

We had originally planned to use Eliot's "The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock" rather than "The Hollow Men," since the character interest in the former poem probably renders it more accessible to eleventh grade students. Since "Prufrock" is not in the Immortal Poems volume, we had hoped to get permission to reproduce the poem in this unit. Unfortunately, Eliot stipulated before his death that none of his poems could be reproduced by mimeograph or similar processes, so we have had to leave it out and substitute "The Hollow Men," which is in Immortal Poems. We have prepared study materials for "Prufrock," however, and add them here (and in the Student Version) in the hope that some teachers will have access to enough printed copies of "Prufrock" so their classes may study the poem.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," T. S. Eliot

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" not only is a twentieth century example of the dramatic monologue, but also illustrates a controlled use and variation of form, both conventional and freely improvised. Eliot's use of stanzaic breaks, punctuation, rhyme, and line breaks, seems always to support the statement of the poem or the subject. All these elements also contribute greatly to the pleasure of the poem, so that the interweaving of sound and sense seems, at times, unbelievably skillful. A careful study of Eliot's poem may serve to convince the student who is still doubtful that a poet can use his technique so consciously, or who may feel that a poet creates rhymes because they sound nice, and that it is the critic or reader who imposes an interpretation on that use.

The eleventh grade student may be disturbed or puzzled by certain apparently obscure elements in the poem. The Italian epigraph, for example, or the difficulty in identifying the "you" of the first line, or transition between some stanzas and images, such as the jump from "lonely men in shirt-sleeves," line 71, to the following "I should have been a pair of ragged claws," all may cause the student to feel that the poem is more difficult to apprehend than it really is. For this reason, it may be well to suggest that the student approach the poem first as an emotional experience created in terms of images which, although they sometimes make great spatial or logical leaps, develop continuously in their emotional connotations.

Some specific information which may give the student a solid foundation to begin an analysis of the poem is helpful. The title establishes the protagonist, names him and also, in his name, suggests something of what he is like. Let the students discuss freely what the name, J. Alfred Prufrock, suggests to them; the use of the initial; what words "Prufrock" sounds like. The title also says that this is a "love song" and when we read the first line of the poem we may guess that the "you" is the object of the song, although an actual physical presence or companion is not necessarily borne out in the rest of the poem. The time is also specific, evening, teatime, October. The place is a city, particularly a cheap, commercial section of "half-deserted streets." The poem takes the form, at the beginning, of a visit to, a journey down, and a search through these streets. The weather, mild, nostalgic, fogged in the evening, also contributes to the mood of longing, and of an unsatisfying nostalgia for things half-experienced.

The students should consider first the divisions of the poem themselves and how they represent units of thought or imagery. The length of stanzas may show something about the poem. For example, the two-line stanza "In the room. . ." is repeated, and other short stanzas seem to represent a similar shift in focus. Does the alternation of stanzas represent a similar alternation in thought; is there any reason for the increase in short divisions as the poem moves to its conclusion? The student should also look at the length of lines and see how this is varied. The lines are broken not only rhythmically, but to create a kind of punctuation as well. The slowest, most meditative thoughts seem to appear in the longest lines; questions are often contained in abrupt, shorter lines. Another element of form Eliot uses is repetition, which sometimes takes the form of whole sentences or phrases, acting like a refrain, and sometimes is a matter of repeating certain words and images to interlock different statements. Some of the repetitions particularly important are the statements concerning time ("And indeed there will be time,"), the questions "Do I dare," and "how should I presume," "would it have been worth it, after all," and the irritable, "That is not what I meant at all;/That is not it, at all," as well as such word and syntactical repetitions as "I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed," or "I grow old. . . . I grow old. . . ." Students should easily see, by now, how repetition gives emphasis and underlines the recurrent theme of a poem, as well as providing unity of sound.

And finally the student should consider the use of rhyme in the poem, another form of repetition. An attempt to mark the rhymes in the poem will show that Eliot makes great use both of rhymed couplets and of a pattern of rhyme in alternating lines. However, noticing the irregularities in the patterns will perhaps show more about his use of rhyme than the appearance of conventional patterns themselves. For example, the third, unrhyming line of the poem breaks the pattern established in the first two lines and gives the statement a sense of completion, rest, to go along with the image of anesthesia. The pattern of rhyming couplets is again picked up until line ten, when the non-rhyming line emphasizes the pause after the important "overwhelming question" and the following transitional, rhyming lines which push both reader and protagonist into the ensuing search. The rhyme scheme in the third section is looser, less regular, and there are as many initial sound repetitions in the lines as final ones. The first two words are repeated, and lines 17, 18, and 19 begin with l, which is picked up on the end of line 20, in "leap," and again in the last rhyming word, "asleep." The liquid l also occurs near the beginning of the first two lines in "yellow" and the beginning of lines 20 and 21 in "Slipped" and "Curled." In short, the loose rhyme pattern works with the large number of soft and liquid sounds to reinforce the languid, sleepy cat-fog image, which also continues the mood of the anesthetic image in the first section.

It is one thing for the student to identify such effects; however, he needs also to see that they are important to understanding and experiencing the total poem. This particular poem does not lend itself well to paraphrase. One might end up with something like the following: Let's go together, to some cheap teashop where women are talking about art; the fog tonight makes me think of a cat falling asleep. Perhaps it would work out to have the students first read some of the poem aloud, or to lip read it, the first three or four sections. Let them read it quite slowly, slightly exaggerating the natural pauses and the pauses at the ends of lines, and the sound repetitions. Then let them discuss whether or not the poem has established a consistent mood, and what it is. Where does the predominant mood of sleep, anesthesia, seem to be broken or interrupted? Where does the poem seem to pick up speed, to become questioning or anxious? The themeof the "overwhelming question" of course becomes clearer later in the poem, with the increased number of images of a man, trying to face himself, to make decisions, to act, to become something besides mere anesthetized existence. The students should see that the poet is preparing here, with images of somnolence and dulling, for the later agitation, questioning, images of life to be acted or taken, and the final overwhelming drowning image.

The fourth section says "there will be time" to do any number of things, "murder and create," and time too "for you. . . and me" implying a time perhaps to love. But that this is mere procrastination, a putting off until tomorrow, is seen when the speaker ironically says there will be "time yet for a hundred indecisions" rather than decisions, and the final "toast and tea" image diminishes all the preceding images of action to insignificance.

In the sixth section we see the protagonist more clearly, a man afraid to act, worrying about what other people think of him and his thinning hair, his pretensions to modest elegance which he fears is unsuccessful because of his spindly arms and legs. These images of self-consciousness make ridiculous his pretentious "Do I dare/Disturb the universe?" We doubt not only that he dare but that he is able.

This effective contrasting between great things and a small, crippling self-consciousness is carried out in the seventh section as well. "For I have known them all already" hints at a life of great experience, but what the speaker has known is indecision, a life "measured out. . . with coffee spoons," in small units of time and action. The music he hears is "from a farther room."

In the eighth section, what he has known is shown to be "The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase." In other words, this is a recall to his earlier wondering of what people think of him. He sees himself as a man who has suffered social slights, the cutting word, the rebuttal, which have incapacitated him for making social contact, specifically here with the object of his "love song"; and "how should I presume?"

This itemization of his life's experience, signaled by the repetition of "I have. . . known them all," continues in the next section, where he says that he has been moved by a woman, attracted to her. In a usual love song one might expect a loving description of the woman's beauty; here it is only hinted at, the cool image of white arms with the sensual detail "downed with light brown hair," and we are recalled to Prufrocks self-conscious inability to involve himself when he considers this a digression. He is a man of contradictions; which will not allow him to act; for he calls himself back from involvement and yet asks "how should I begin?"

In the next short section he seems to see himself with ironic clarity; his only action in life has been to observe, and he senses a similarity between himself and the "lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows," who are also observers of the street. In the next section appears the strange image of "a pair of ragged claws." Prufrock seems to see himself as a sort of shelled creature buried under water, on the dark floor, like a hermit crab.

The image of the evening or fog as a cat reappears in the next section, and perhaps suggests a return to the mood of the earlier section. The two preceding sections have brought Prufrock close to stark self-realization; but he is not to escape. When he asks, "Have [I] the strength to force the moment to its crisis?" the mock heroic tone coupled with the mundane and really trivial situation of tea time make this clear. He resigns himself: "I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker." Even servants, or whatever force is represented in "the eternal Footman," have no respect for him. He admits, "I was afraid."

From this point on the poem is not questioning whether action is possible, but is, rather, looking backward, resigning, asking whether it would "have been worth it." Prufrock rationalizes his inaction. He compares the unacted teatime confrontation to great things, such as Lazarus rising from the dead. Indeed, it would have been like rising from the dead for Prufrock to take action; but certainly he suffers in the comparison. He asks whether it would have been worthwhile to make the effort, if she had only repulsed him irritably. He does not consider the possibility that things might have been better. Yet he himself is frustrated by his rationalization. He does not seem able to account for all his feelings. "It is impossible to say just what I mean!" He admits to himself that he is a minor character, not even great, like Hamlet, in his indecision.

Matters of vanity, appearances, come once more to the foreground of his thoughts. Shall he attempt to be freer, more sporty, more daring? But the acts he considers are so trivial they seem ridiculous.

The image of Prufrock, an aged man walking on the beach, serves as a transition to the final sea image, which recalls the earlier "silent seas." He hears the mermaids but, like "the music from a farther room," their singing is not for him and he must always be the outsider, the eavesdropper on life.

The next to the last section contains a beautiful and exciting image of freedom, sensuality, action, all the things which Prufrock has not had. Again, the students might well read this aloud, perhaps all six final lines.

"I have seen them" he cries, but he is merely watching, from the beach. There is both longing and self-deception in these lines, as earlier in the poem where he tells all the things "I have known." The highly lyrical quality of these final lines signs a final escape into imagination and desire, until "human voices," or reality, "wake us, and we drown." For Prufrock can only exist in this rich element in imagination, and reality kills this existence.

The above explication, although comparatively long, has not begun to exhaust the possibilities for discussion of the poem. For example, one might enumerate the examples of sea-imagery, hair-imagery, light or color imagery, and so on. The theme of the poem itself is subject to statement in a variety of ways. The poem may be about decision and indecision, or appearances and reality, or a number of other things that all combine to make up the total statement. Each of these might be pursued individually. However, one must proceed with at least some faith that the comprehension of poetry is not entirely an academic matter. The students should be able to enjoy the poem with just a little discussion of what it is all about, and yet they should also see that an intensive study of the poem will enrich that enjoyment without, in any way, exhausting the poem.

When he concludes with this unit, the student should have a flexible idea of what overall form is in poetry, and some of the ways it is used, both for pleasure and sense. Stanzaic divisions, rhyme units, metrical units, as well as the verse line itself and divisions of thought, are all elements of pattern in poetry and are used to some degree in all poems. When one of these is not used in a poem, chances are the poet has as good a reason for not using the device as for using the ones he does.

Throughout the unit there should be an effort to compare and contrast the different poems, and to recall, when appropriate, poems from the earlier unit.

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OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

POETRY
Part One: "A Way of Saying"
Part Two: "Search for Order"

Literature Curriculum V
Student Version

The project reported herein was supported through the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

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Student Version Unit I

This unit is designed to help you learn something about the poet's craft, something about what A. E. Housman meant when he said, "Poetry is not a thing said, but a way of saying it." Housman does not, of course, mean that poetry does not tell us things, but rather that the images a poet uses, the figures of speech, the rhyme, all the sounds and suggestions of a poem, are so much a part of what the poet says that we can't separate the two and still have poetry. If you doubt this, you can test your doubts on the following examples.

Each step in this unit is concerned with a particular problem. Your teacher may not require that you study every poem, but you should study poems from each section. Even a quick reading of poems you may not study specifically will help make clear by example the concepts you are looking at more carefully in other poems.

Unit I involves the study of poems particularly rich in specific poetic devices. The first group of poems, for example, concerns the use of imagery; the second group emphasizes metaphor, simile, and personification. The unit has been divided in this way for convenience, but certainly poetic devices do not always appear in such a clear-cut way in poems. A series of images may combine to create a metaphor, and a metaphor which suggests a meaning beyond itself may act as a symbol. So do not worry if the terms sometimes seem to overlap, or if you cannot always divide the images in a poem into neat columns numbered one, two, three, for this is not always the way poetry works.

However, you will find that familiarity with technical terms gives you some tools for talking about and analyzing poetry, especially with respect to the "way of saying it." After you have finished Unit I, you should be familiar with many devices which contribute to a work's poetic quality. Unit II involves you in a more careful and complete study of particular types of poems, and encourages you to use knowledge that you gained from Unit I.

The following poem illustrates a number of poetic devices. Ignoring for the moment, at least critically, what the poem says, see if you can sort out some of the ways in which it is said.

I Heard a Fly Buzz When I Died

I heard a fly buzz when I died;
The stillness in the room
Was like the stillness in the air
Between the heaves of storm.

The eyes around had wrung them dry,
And breaths were gathering firm
For that last onset when the king
Be witnessed in the room.

I willed my keepsakes, signed away
What portion of me be
Assignable--and then it was
There interposed a fly,

With blue, uncertain, stumbling buzz
Between the light and me;
And then the windows failed, and then
I could not see to see.
Emily Dickinson

1. Does the poem let you see anything? Hear anything? Which sense is appealed to more specifically? What other senses are appealed to? Look, for example, at the line, "The eyes around had wrung them dry," and see how many sense impressions it gives you. Do you seem to see the "eyes" and see with them as well? What feeling do you get from "wrung" and "dry"?

2. Does it make sense that the "I" should speak as if already dead and remembering death? Would it be just as well to say "Death will be like hearing a fly buzz and then not hearing it any more"?

3. What does "storm" in stanza one suggest? "King" in stanza two? Is there any reason to take them literally?

4. What sense does it make to say "blue. . . buzz" in the last stanza? Can you hear blue or see a buzz? What happens when the poet combines these two words in this way?

5. Does the poem rhyme? Do "room" and "storm" rhyme; do they sound alike? What about "firm" and "room," or "be" and "fly"?

6. What words are repeated in the poem?

7. Why does the poet say "I could not see to see" instead of just "I could not see"?

The Emily Dickinson poem seems to have death as its subject, and the author seems to telling us, or letting us feel, how she feels about the subject. People have many different attitudes toward death which may range from being simply morbid to being highly moral. They may regard death as a biological fact or a mysterious human experience, or both. It may be hard to tell someone else how you feel about death, or about anything else which evokes personal or abstract feelings. Poetry is one way people share such feelings, for poetry makes concrete, specific images appeal to our senses so that we may share less concrete feelings or perceptions of another, the poet.

Imagery

The poet's effective use of specific detail helps the reader to form sharp, vivid images. The word *soldier* is more specific than man. The phrase *weary soldier* or *battle-weary soldier* is still more specific, and more capable of producing a picture in the reader's imagination. *A dirty man in a khaki uniform* might produce a different picture but describe the same soldier, as might *the blond soldier with the smudged face.* Images work with different degrees of concreteness but how an image works or what it shows you does not depend entirely on how specific it is. For each image a different one could probably be substituted to give the same literal meaning. But a poet always is deciding between possible images, and which possible concrete details he is going to show you of a person, object, scene.

Read "Richard Cory," by Edward Arlington Robinson and see what and how much you know about him. (p. 498, *Immortal Poems*)

1. What visual images does the poet offer in the first stanza? What is the force of the word *pavement*? How does it help to make a strong distinction between Richard Cory and the *we* referred to in line 2? Why is the use of *crown* an effective image-making word? What characteristics do you associate with someone who is *imperially slim*?

2. List the words or groups of words in the second stanza that produce strong, visual images. Which do you think is the most striking and most revealing detail in this stanza? Why do you think the poet has Richard Cory say "Good-morning" rather than "Good-evening"? Change the word "glittered" in line 8 to "sparkled." Does it seem to produce an equally effective line? Why or why not?

3. In the third stanza, consider the words "rich," "richer than a king," and "grace." Do the images in this stanza seem like any of those in the first two stanzas?

4. Although this is Richard Cory' s poem, the reader learns much about the "we" referred to in line 2, the pavement walkers. How do the images referring to the "we" differ from those referring to Richard Cory?

5. Do any of the images in the last stanza seem consistent with the images in the preceding stanzas? Why do you think the poet tells us it was "one calm summer night"? Compare "we. . . waited for the light" with earlier images referring to Richard Cory, such as "glittered when he walked." Does the final picture of Richard Cory tell us a great deal about him or does it simply show us a picture of a man who, "Went home and put a bullet through his head"?

6. What is the effect of the similar images in the poem? What is the effect of the contrasting images?

Identifying the Image

The first stanza of "The Eve of St. Agnes" by John Keats contains many image-making words. Read the stanza and the analysis which follows.

> St. Agnes' Eve - Ah, *bitter chill* it was!
> The *owl*, for all his feathers, was *a-cold*;
> The *hare* *limp'd* *trembling* through the *frozen* *grass*,
> And *silent* was the flock in *woolly* *fold*;
> *Numb* were the *Beadsman's* *fingers*, while he *told*
> His *rosary*, and while his *frosted* *breath*,
> Like pious incense from a *censer* *old*,
> Seem'd *ta king* *flight* for *heaven*, without a death,
> Past the *sweet* *Virgin's* *picture*, while his *prayer* *he* *saith*.

In line one, *bitter chill* evokes both a thermal and a kinesthetic image. The thermal sense allows us to distinguish varying degrees of heat and cold; the kinesthetic sense makes us aware of muscular tension. Here we not only sense cold, but the tight, shiver evoked by *chill*. *Owl* in line two produces a visual image of color, size, and shape. The owl's feathers add a touch image to that of sight, and *a-cold* strengthens the touch image and adds kinesthetic and thermal sensations. In line three, sight images are created by *hare*, *limp'd* *trembling*, and *grass*. Tension is felt in *limp'd* and *trembling*, and touch as well as the thermal and kinesthetic sensations are called forth by *frozen*. *Silent* in line four is a sound image; *flock* and *fold* give a visual image of size and shape; *woolly* allows the reader to *feel* (touch) the sheep as they huddle together to find warmth. In line five, touch (*numb*), sound (*told*), and sight (*beadsman's* *fingers*) images are presented. Sight images appear again in line six with *rosary* and *frosted* *breath*, with a least a hint of sound in the movement of the rosary and a strong thermal image in *frosted*. In line seven, *incense* appeals to the sense of smell; and *censer*, to sight. *Taking* *flight* in line eight is a kinesthetic and visual image. In line nine *sweet* *Virgin's* *picture* is a visual image; *prayer* he saith is a sound image.

Images let us see, hear, touch things, and each separate image has its own suggestions. But poets often use a series of images which, all together, not only give a more complete picture but also a stronger feeling or mood than any of the images separately. Read the following poems giving particular attention to similarities or differences in images. Notice not only which senses are appealed to but how.

Winter

When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipp'd and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
Tu-whit;
Tu-who, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marion's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
- Tu-whit;
Tu-who, a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.
William Shakespeare

1. When we think of "Winter" we probably think of snow or rain and other more personal associations we have with winter. What images in the poem remind you of your own idea of winter? Which images are not like ones you would choose to describe winter?

2. "Greasy Joan" and "the staring owl" both appear twice. Are these two images different or alike? In what ways?

3. Do the images suggest, on the whole, a pleasant or unpleasant feeling about winter? Why?

In the following ballad, the language may seem difficult to understand. Modernized spellings of the underlined words are given in the right margin, but if you simply pronounce some of the difficult words you will probably find that you can get the meaning without too much trouble. Do not worry about such difficulties, but simply read the poem for whatever pictures, or images, you can get from it.

The Twa Corbies

As I was walking all alane,	alone
I heard twa corbies making a mane;	two ravens; moan
The tane unto the t'other say,	one
"Where sall we gang and dine today?"	shall we go

"In behint yon auld fail dyke,	old turf wall
I wot there lies a new-slain knight;	know
And naebody kens that he lies there,	knows
But his hawk, his hound, and lady fair.	

"His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,
His lady's ta'en another mate,
So we may mak our dinner sweet.

"Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,	neck-bone
And I'll pick out his bonny blue een;	eyes
Wi ae lock o' his gowden hair	with one; golden
We'll theek our nest when it grows bare.	thatch

"Mony a one for him makes mane,
But nane sall ken where he is gane;
O'er his white banes when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair."

Anonymous

1. For a short poem, this manages to introduce quite a number of "characters," through images. How does the poet limit or choose what he shows us about the knight's lady, his hound, and his hawk? Why? What sort of images does he use in referring to the fallen knight?

2. Would you call the two ravens an image? If so, are they a good image for the poem? Why?

3. What part does color play in the imagery of the last two stanzas? Do you think it is necessary to say that bones are "white"? Try reading the last two stanzas with all the color words omitted. Does this make a difference in the feeling you get from the imagery, or a significant difference in what it lets you see?

4. Are the images of the poem primarily images of life or death, or both? Is there any sharp contrast between images?

5. Sometimes two or more images, especially placed close together, may combine to create one, stronger image. Consider the white bones and eternally blowing wind in the last stanza. To what senses do these images appeal? Do the two images seem to combine to give a larger or stronger image? How are they different; how alike? Why do you think this image appears at the end of the poem?

6. Do you think that the images in this poem, or in "Winter," add up to give a feeling or emotion, mood or atmosphere, whether or not you can say exactly what it is? Why?

In the following poem, "To An Athlete Dying Young," A. E. Housman uses images in a more complex way than the two preceding poems do. It is not so easy to capture the mood of the Housman poem without trying to see what he is saying about his subject. In a way, Housman is using images as a springboard for his statement. We might say that "The Twa Corbies" tells us that life is beautiful but death is lasting, but this is something we infer from what we see in the poem. Read the following poem with particular attention to the images in the first two stanzas.

To An Athlete Dying Young

The time you won your town the race
We chaired you through the market-place;
Man and boy stood cheering by,
And home we brought you shoulder-high.

To-day, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsman of a stiller town.

Smart lad, to slip betimes away
From fields where glory does not stay,
And early though the laurel grows
It withers quicker than the rose.

Eyes the shady night has shut
Cannot see the record cut,
And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the ears.

Now you will not swell the rout
Of lads that wore their honors out,
Runners whom renown outran
And the name died before the man.

So set, before its echoes fade,
The fleet foot on the sill of shade,
And hold to the low lintel up
The still-defended challenge-cup.

And round that early-laurelled head
Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,
And find unwithered on its curls
The garland briefer than a girl's.
A. E. Housman

1. Make one list of the images in the first stanza and another of the images in the second stanza. Compare the two lists and see how they are similar and how different. For example, is there an image in the second stanza to compare or contrast with the auditory image, "cheering by," in the first stanza? What senses are appealed to in line two, "We chaired you through the market-place"? Does the same kinesthetic image take on a different feeling in "Shoulder-high we bring you home" in the second stanza?

2. Look for other examples of the same sense being appealed to in similar images but with different effect. For example, look for all the auditory images and see how they are the same and how different; or the kinesthetic images of lifting.

The preceding poems use, for the most part, images which are taken directly from the subjects of the poems. John Donne, in "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning," uses several varied images which may seem unrelated to, and are certainly not the same as, the subject of the poem.

Donne is said to have written this poem to his wife when she was worrying about his journey to France. The tone is one of tender consolation and uses a series of images intended to convey the spiritual, enduring nature of their love, which would overcome mere physical separation. He says that true love is spiritual rather than physical, and that no matter how far apart the lovers are physically, their spirits will remain as one; they should, therefore, suffer no grief in separation.

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
And whisper to their souls to go,
Whilst some of their sad friends do say,
The breath goes now, and some say, No;

So let us melt, and make no noise,
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;
"Twere profanation of our joys
To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears,
Men reckon what it did and meant;
But trepidation of the spheres,
Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love,
Whose soul is sense, cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refined
That ourselves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
Care less eyes, lips, hands to miss.

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth if the' other do.

And though it in the center sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans, and hearkens after it,
And grows erect as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me who must,
Like th' other foot, obliquely run,
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end where I begun.
John Donne

1. Consider stanzas one and two together. What advice or direction does the poet give in stanza two? How does he say their parting should be? These two stanzas introduce a comparison between true spiritual love and mere physical love. What images does the poet use for each type? What is the possible significance of the word laity in line 8?

2. How does stanza three continue this comparison between the physical or earthly, and the spiritual?

3. How does the word sublunary, stanza four, contribute to the understanding of physical love?

4. In stanza five, is "refined" an image-making word? Does the line "Care less eyes, lips, hands to miss" suggest that the poet is repudiating physical love altogether?

5. What image is presented in stanza six? Is it a visual image or some other kind, or both? Do you think it is an effective image? How?

6. How does the poet use the compass to show how true lovers face physical separation? What kind of compass is meant in this comparison? To which senses does the compass image appeal? Do you think the comparison works well in conveying the poet's idea?

7. The images in the poem range from a deathbed scene to a compass, and may seem unrelated. What things do the images have in common? How are they different? Do the similarities and differences in the images contribute to the idea of the poem? If the poem consisted of only the last three stanzas, perhaps changing "If they be two" to "If our souls be two," would the poem say more or less the same thing it does now?

8. If Donne's use of imagery is effective, you should have a clear understanding of the distinction he made between physical love and spiritual love. Without going outside the poem, describe these two kinds of love.

9. As the introduction indicates, this poem supposedly grew out of a real experience. Do you think this poem would have brought any real consolation to Donne's wife? Defend your answer. You will need to develop some notion of the kind of person Mrs. Donne was, or at least what kind of person her husband thought she was.

Metaphor, Simile, and Personification

When you analyzed the images in the Donne poem, you probably noticed that the images worked in different ways. Some, such as "eyes, lips, hands," showed us something of the people in the poem. The compass image showed us an unrelated object, yet tied it in with the poem's subject. This probably did not strike you as unusual, since we use images in our everyday speech in the same way. A cliché like "raining cats and dogs" doesn't seem to make much sense literally, but we have heard it so often it doesn't strike us as odd that cats and dogs are used to tell something about the weather. Good poets however do not usually use clichés, although many fresh, poetic expressions have been taken into our speech and have become clichés from repeated use. The poet's search for the right, fresh image has a great deal to do with why he uses images at all. This returns us again to the problem of saying the unsayable. At one level an image may simply show us a thing, what it looks, feels, smells like. But some images, such as the compass in Donne's poem, also show us two things which don't seem to be alike and then show us how they are alike.

It has been said that this ability of the poet to see similarities in unlike things is the most important part of his art. As you read the following examples, consider whether or not you think this is true, and why. How, for example, does this make poetry different from a news story?

When "like" or "as" sets up the comparison, it is known as a simile. When the comparison is implied, we refer to it as a metaphor. Consider the use of metaphor and simile in the following poem by Tennyson.

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.
Alfred, Lord Tennyson

1. List the metaphors and similes you can identify. Explain exactly what is being compared in each.

2. To which sense does each of the comparisons appeal? Why is line four an especially good comparison?

3. What is the precise subject of this poem?

4. What overall attitude about this subject do the comparisons tend to establish?

5. What title would you give to this poem?

6. Turn back to Donne's "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning," and see if you can identify the similes and metaphors in it.

Read the following Tennyson poems and see how metaphor is used.

Flower in the Crannied Wall

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower--but *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

1. Could it be said that the entire poem is a single metaphor? If so, how, and what things are being compared?

2. Is the image of the flower picked out of its cranny particularly suitable to what the poet is saying through metaphor?

I Envy Not In Any Moods

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth,
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

1. The poem contains a series of images of things which exist in a kind of bondage. Their existence may be safe, without worry, or easy, but they do not know what they are missing. In light of the statement in the last stanza, would you call these images metaphors? What is being compared?

2. Which stanzas seem the most effective? Which the least? Do you think that the overall metaphor in this poem works as well as that in "Flower in the Crannied Wall"?

Simile says that one thing is like another. Metaphor talks about one thing in terms of another or identifies one thing with another. A personification acts in a similar way, identifying two different things with each other, but a personification is more particular than a simile or metaphor in that it always talks about a non-human thing in human terms. A tree's branches may be called arms, or a storm may be talked about in terms of human emotions, that is, as an angry storm. What part does personification play in the poem "To Autumn" by John Keats?

To Autumn

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
    Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun:
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
    With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
    And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
        To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
    And still more, later flowers for the bees,
    Until they think warm days will never cease,
        For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
    Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
    Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
    Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
        Spares the next swath and all its twinèd flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
    Steady thy laden head across a brook;
    Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
        Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, --
While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.
John Keats

1. What is personified in the poem? Is the personification complete? That is, are we asked to see a whole person or merely human characteristics? Do you think that this is a good way of saying something that may be hard to describe?

2. Are Summer and Spring personified in the poem? Why or why not? Is "the small gnats mourn" in the last stanza a personification? What about "the vines that round the thatch-eves run" in the first stanza, or "Hedge-crickets sing" and "gathering swallows twitter" in the last stanza? Why or why not?

Symbolism

Quite early in "The Masque of the Red Death," Edgar Allan Poe describes a "gigantic clock of ebony." The description is careful and detailed, designed to give the reader a clear, visual image of a clock. When the story ends, the masqueraders have been stricken with the Red Death. "And one by one dropped the revelers in the blood-bedewed hall of their revel, and died in the despairing posture of his fall. And the life of the ebony clock went out with that of the last of the gay." Here, the clock takes on a new meaning. It has marked time throughout the story, but it now becomes a symbol for death.

Although image, metaphor, and symbol are similar and sometimes difficult to distinguish, a symbol may be considered as something that means more than what it is. A symbol carries to the reader's mind an image of the concrete reality to which it refers, and that reality suggests something else as well. Some of the preceding poems contain images which act as symbols. Perhaps symbolism can best be understood by examples. In the Emily Dickinson poem, "I Heard a Fly Buzz When I Died," does the fly, or its buzzing, seem to mean more than what it is? Are the eagle, the flower, and the linnet in the

Tennyson poems symbols? In "To Autumn," could the human figure that is suggested in stanza two be a symbol? Consider the difference between the ways the buzzing fly in the Dickinson poem and the eagle in the Tennyson poem are used, in the context of the poems.

Sometimes the meaning of a symbol in literature can be perceived immediately; sometimes a symbol cannot be understood from ordinary personal experience but must be studied or looked for within the context of the poem. Read Robert Browning's "My Star" and then consider the questions which follow.

My Star

All that I know
Of a certain star
Is, it can throw
(Like the angled spar)*
Now a dart of red,
Now a dart of blue;
Till my friends have said
They would fain see, too,
My star that dartles the red and the blue!
Then it stops like a bird; like a flower, hangs furled:
They must solace themselves with the Saturn above it.
What matter to me if their star is a world?
Mine has opened its soul to me; therefore I love it.
Robert Browning

1. What is the literal meaning of the poem?

2. What could the star be? Could it refer to the poet's wife? To his poetic genius? To his goal in life? What other things might the star symbolize?

3. Perhaps the star is not a symbol at all, but a literal star which the poet feels that he possesses in some way. If, on the other hand, you feel that it is a symbol, defend your opinion.

4. Is it necessary to establish an exact meaning for the star for the poem to be successful? Can it mean different things to different people?

Often symbolic poems allow for several interpretations within a fundamental, larger idea. Consider the possibilities in "The Sick Rose" by William Blake.

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* A prism.

O rose, thou art sick!
The invisible worm
That flies in the night
In the howling storm,
Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy,
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

1. What is the literal meaning of the poem?

2. Read the poem again and consider other meanings. For example, in the first line, the poet addresses the rose and says that it is sick. Does the word sick seem to ascribe human character to the rose? In what way might this suggest that we are discussing something more than a rose?

3. Which particular words in this poem have a strong connotative value which suggest that the poem has more than a worm-infested rose as its subject?

4. What is the meaning of the poem if the rose symbolizes love? If it symbolizes innocence? If it symbolizes spiritual life? What does the worm represent in relation to each of these abstract terms? Is there something fundamental within all of these possible interpretations?

Sometimes a poet introduces a symbol in the first stanza, developing and expanding it throughout the poem. On other occasions, the symbolic significance of the object about which the poet is writing is not made apparent until the final stanza. Read "Go, Lovely Rose" and determine how the poet makes use of his symbol.

Go, Lovely Rose

Go, lovely rose--
Tell her that wastes her time and me
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts where no men abide
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired:
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die--that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee:
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair.

Edmund Waller

1. In the first stanza, the poet personifies the rose, that is, he gives it human characteristics. What does the poet ask the rose to do? Is the rose used as a symbol in this stanza? Explain.

2. Compare the use of the rose in the first and last stanzas. Does the rose have the same symbolic value throughout the poem? Does the symbolic value of the rose grow with each stanza to culminate in a final symbol, or does the rose symbolize more than one thing at different places in the poem?

3. What does the rose symbolize? Compare the use of the rose as a symbol in this poem and the preceding Blake poem. Does the rose have a clearer symbolic meaning in one poem than in the other? Why? What does this show about the poetic use of symbolism? Although one of these symbols may be clearer than the other, is it possible or necessary to say that one is better than the other?

4. In the first stanza, your initial reading showed the rose as a rose, but now you also regard it as a symbol. Read the poem again and consider why the poet uses the word seems in line four; why he speaks of the flower in the desert dying unseen in stanza two.

5. Does the symbolic meaning of the rose, at the end of the poem, have any shock value? What is gained for the poet's argument by using the rose as a symbol, instead of just saying live while you're young and beautiful because it won't last?

6. If all things must die as does the rose, does the second line of stanza one seem more of a reproach than it did the first time you read the poem? Explain.

Irony and Paradox

Like other poetic devices, irony and paradox are ways of arriving at or illustrating truths or ideas which cannot be stated as effectively or at all in a direct, literal way.

Shock value is one aspect of a paradox. A poet may employ it in either a situation or statement. He startles or bewilders the reader by stating what seems impossible but which, on further examination, will be found to be true. The initial, apparent absurdity really underscores the truth of what is being stated. In "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" the idea that two are really one is a paradox. Read the following poem and identify the initial paradox. Is the impossibility of the paradox resolved by the end of the poem, or on rereading?

My Life Closed Twice

My life closed twice before its close;
It yet remains to see
If Immortality unveil
A third event to me,

So huge, so hopeless to conceive,
As these that twice befell.
Parting is all we know of heaven,
And all we need of hell.

Emily Dickinson

1. Which lines clarify the meaning of the first line? What does the first line mean?

2. Do you think a paradox is more likely to depend on a figurative statement than a literal one? What part do you think double-meanings, of single words or whole statements, play in creating an effective paradox?

3. Does Emily Dickinson in this poem use paradox primarily as an attention-getting device? What part does metaphor play in the paradox in this poem? What is the subject of the paradox, and of the poem? How does the use of paradox enable the poet, in this poem, to tell us something about the subject that might be difficult to say without the device?

The term irony implies incongruity. For example, in "Richard Cory" it is ironical that a man who appeared to be so fortunate in all ways should shoot himself. There is a certain irony implied in "The Twa Corbies" in that, while the knight lies dead, his hound, hawk, and lady, instead of mourning, are off pursuing their own lives. In Housman's "To An Athlete Dying Young" it is ironical that the dead man's friends should carry him through the town to his grave in much the same manner, almost a burlesque, that they carried him victorious shortly before. These are all examples of irony of situation. Verbal irony can be defined as that discrepancy between what is said and what is meant. This is the sort of irony that we sometimes use in sarcasm or humorous understatements, such as "A bit breezy, isn't it?" in reference to a hurricane. Irony may be used in a statement which says one thing, only to mean the opposite.

Look for examples of irony in the following Auden poem. The poem deals, overtly, with paintings by "Old Masters" in a museum. Icarus was a boy, in Greek mythology, who flew with wings made of wax and feathers. When he flew too high, the heat of the sun melted his wings and he dropped into the sea to drown. Other paintings referred to have as their subjects the birth of Christ, or the crucifixion. You do not have to know the paintings, however, to see what Auden is saying, for he supplies all that is necessary in the poem.

"Musée des Beaux Arts" (See Immortal Poems, p. 580.)

1. What are some of the incongruities in the poem?

2. Does Auden seem to be saying one thing when he means another?

3. Is it irony to say that "The Old Masters" understood the place of suffering in life? Is it ironical that people are eating, going about their business, while suffering takes place elsewhere? What is the irony in the last three lines of the poem?

4. Do you feel that Auden is making an ironical statement, showing us ironical situations, talking about irony itself, or simply saying that this is the way life is, ironical or not? Perhaps you feel that he is doing all, some, or none of these things. Explain your opinion.

Since paradox presents double meaning, it can be an effective conveyance for irony. This can be seen in the following poem.

Holy Thursday

Is this a holy thing to see
In a rich and fruitful land,
Babes reduced to misery
Fed with cold and usurous hand?

Is that trembling cry a song?
Can it be a song of Joy?
And so many children poor?
It is a land of poverty!

And their sun does never shine,
And their fields are bleak and bare,
And their ways are fill'd with thorns:
It is eternal winter there.

For where'er the sun does shine,
And where'er the rain does fall,
Babes can never hunger there,
Nor poverty the mind appal.

William Blake

1. What irony does the title convey? Explain the paradoxes you recognize in the first and second stanzas.

2. The poet states that the land, lacking sun and rain, is a place of poverty and suffering. In the third stanza, does the poet mean literal sun and fields? Does the use of the thorny pathway image indicate that the sun and fields may refer to a way of living? If we consider that such images as sun, fields, winter, and rain may be both literal and figurative, what discrepancy is apparent?

3. Now read the last stanza again, carefully. Do you think Blake is really talking about a place where there is eternal winter? What might he be saying about the way life is in reality?

4. Blake seems to be saying that social evils can be blamed on natural conditions, such as poor weather, or barren land. Is he saying one thing when he means another? Is there anything in the poem to suggest who or what is to blame for "Babes reduced to misery"?

5. What does this poem show about the possible uses of irony and paradox? That is, why doesn't the poet say what he means in a more direct way? Does the paradox in the poem have any shock

value? Are irony and paradox used to emphasize, get attention, illustrate?

6. State briefly, in your own words, the paradox of the poem.

Sounds in Poetry

The poet considers not only the meaning of words but also the way they sound. This may mean that he constructs his poem on a very exacting pattern of rhyme, or simply that he chooses the words, rhyming or not, so that their sound, their music, adds to the pleasure and meaning of the poem. Sound in poetry is one reason that a paraphrase of a poem can never reproduce the work exactly, for even the most subtle and exact paraphrase will never duplicate the sound of a poem.

Before you begin a more specific study of some of the sound devices in poetry, read the following poem and see if the sound of it seems musical, seems to add to the sense of the poem in any way, or seems to create any sort of patterns. If possible, it would be a good idea to read the poem aloud, or to lip-read it, for the process of forming the words may help to make you aware of how the poem sounds.

Spring and Fall: To a Young Child

Margaret, are you grieving
Over Goldengrove unleaving?
Leaves, like the things of man, you
With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?
Ah! as the heart grows older
It will come to such sights colder
By and by, nor spare a sigh
Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;
And yet you will weep and know why.
Now no matter, child, the name:
Sorrow's springs are the same.
Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed
What heart heard of, ghost guessed:
It is the blight man was born for,
It is Margaret you mourn for.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

The poet addresses a child, Margaret, who is sad to see Fall come and the leaves falling from the trees. He tells her that as she grows older and sees more autumns, she will come to accept it, and not feel such sorrow. But this thought will not console the child now, who feels sorrow intuitively and does not understand why the leaves fall. In the last line the poet states that Margaret's intuitive sorrow comes from her sensing that like the leaves in fall, and like all living things, she too will grow and then die.

Without yet deciding why, consider whether or not the sound of the poem seems to go well with what is said. Is the poem musical? Look at the first two lines and see how many sounds are repeated. Read the words "Margaret," "grieving," and "Goldengrove" aloud and see if the words feel similar in any way. Look for other lines in which clusters of similar sounds seem to come together. Do these sound clusters or repetitions seem to occur more frequently than you would expect in prose?

The sound of a poem may seem to emphasize or reinforce the sense, but it is not always easy to say why. One reason is that we cannot say that one kind of sound is always used in certain words or to mean a definite thing. And yet we do make concrete associations with sounds. "A high, thin scream" makes sense to us, whereas a "low, fat scream" is impossible to imagine. "Eeek" sounds like the sound it represents. "Shriek" does too, only less so. Leak, peek, peak, weak, sneak all sound alike and we might even find connections in the senses of the words, such as a thin, little dribble, a little look, the small tapering point of something, a thin underdeveloped person, and a subdued, quiet way of going. Like scream, eek, and shriek, these seem to be thin words, and perhaps "ee" is a thin sound. But of course this is not consistent, and for the suggestions in sounds we must always look to some extent at the meanings of the words and context in which they appear. And yet, though the effect of sound is not always something we can pin down definitely, it does exist, for we experience it.

Look at the Hopkins poem again and see which sounds are repeated within words or as whole words. Following are some groups of words from the poem which might be discussed for the effect of their similar sounds: grieving, unleaving, leaves, leafmeal, weep; born for, mourn for; sigh, lie, why, by and by; sorrow's, springs, same. Does the sound of some of these words seem to emphasize a similarity in the sense of the words? In what ways does sound work to hold the poem together?

Poets have a great deal of freedom in how they choose to use sounds, and may depend greatly on the "ear" for sound, but there are certain identifiable sound devices which are useful in studying poetry. Poets must be alert to word position and size, vowel and consonant sounds considered alone and in relationship to one another, word patterns, stressed and unstressed syllables and the length of lines.

The following presentation of certain sound devices in poetry is necessarily fragmentary, but it may serve as a formal beginning to help you to discover what your own ear for sound will tell you about poetry.

Rhyme is the repetition of similar or identical sounds. A more exact definition of rhyme in poetry is that it is repetition of similar or identical sounds in accented syllables which occupy corresponding places in two or more lines of verse, such as the ends of lines. Perfectly rhymed words have identical sounds in their stressed vowels and all sounds following, but unlike sounds preceding the stressed vowel, as in "pursuing" and "undoing." Words with similar sounds, such as "facing" and "dancing" may be used by poets much as rhyming words are used, but they would not be considered true rhyme because the identical sound occurs only in the last, unaccented syllable.

Consider first the position of the rhymed syllables in each of the examples below. Identify the rhymed syllables and observe the position pattern.

A.
Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him.
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored and imperially slim.

"Richard Cory" E. A. Robinson

B.
In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
While all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moonshine.

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"
S. T. Coleridge

C.
Tie the white fillets then about your lustrous hair
And think no more of what will come to pass
Than bluebirds that go walking on the grass
And chattering on the air.

"Blue Girls" John Crowe Ransom

D.
The time I've lost in wooing,
In watching and pursuing
The light that lies
In woman's eyes,
Has been my heart's undoing

Though wisdom oft has sought me,
I scorn'd the love she brought me,
    My only books
    Were woman's looks
And folly's all they taught me.

"The Time I've Lost in Wooing" Thomas Moore

1. List under each other the four end words from stanza A quoted above. How many syllables are in each word? Are these syllables stressed? When the similarity of sound occurs in a word with only one syllable or in the last syllable of a word, we speak of the rhyme as being masculine. This type of rhyme is considered forceful and strong.

2. Where, in the line, do the rhymes in "Richard Cory" appear? What name might you give to designate rhyme appearing in this position?

3. Now look at the stanza from "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Copy the stanza on your paper and put a circle around the two words in line one which rhyme. Connect the circles. Do the same to line three. How does the rhyme pattern differ from the pattern in "Richard Cory"?

4. If we consider the words that come between the first word and the last word as being the internal part of the line, what do you think might be a suitable name to identify the type of rhyme that occurs in lines one and three? Locate the internal rhymes in the following passages:

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and
    weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore--
While I nodded nearly napping, suddenly there came a
    tapping,
As of someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door--
"'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "Tapping at my chamber
    door---
Only this and nothing more."

"The Raven" E. A. Poe

It was on a Wednesday night, the moon was shining bright
    They robbed the Glendale train,
And the people they did say, for many miles away,
"'Twas the outlaws Frank and Jesse James."

Jesse had a wife, to mourn all her life,
The children they are brave.
'Twas a dirty little coward shot Mister Howard, *
And laid Jesse James in his grave.

Anonymous

5. Circle the rhyming words that occur at the end of lines two and four in the stanza from "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Name the rhyme by using two qualifying adjectives. How many syllables are in the end word in line two? In line four? When this kind of rhyme occurs, we speak of it as being an imperfect rhyme.

6. Copy the stanza from "Blue Girls" by John Crowe Ransom. Draw a line connecting the two rhyming pairs. How many syllables does each rhyming word have? What kind of rhyme is this? Refer to questions one and two if you have difficulty remembering.

7. Copy the stanza from "The Time I've Lost in Wooing" by Thomas Moore. Draw one line under all the words that rhyme with wooing. Draw two lines under words rhyming with books. In how many syllables does the corresponding sound occur in the wooing group? Which syllable is accented in each of these words? If masculine rhyme is the technical name given when only the final accented syllable rhymes, what do you think would be a logical name to apply to a rhyme in which not only the stressed sounds but also the following unstressed sounds rhyme? Classify lies and eyes and then books and looks as to (1) the position of the rhymed syllables and (2) the number of syllables in which the identity of sound occurs. If masculine rhyme is generally considered to be more forceful or vigorous, when do you think the poet would use the kind of rhyme found in such words as wooing?

8. Complete the following outline:
   Types of rhyme according to
   I. Position of the rhymed syllables
      A.
      B.
   II. Number of syllables in which the similarity of sound occurs
      A.
      B.

9. In order to describe the pattern of rhyme (the rhyme scheme) in a particular stanza, letters of the alphabet are used. Thus the sound

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* Howard was the name Jesse was using.

at the end of the first line is labeled a, and all other final rhymes in the stanza which match the first are labeled a. The first line which ends with a different sound is labeled b as are all lines ending with the same sound. This process is continued for each stanza. Work out the rhyme scheme for the four stanzas quoted at the beginning of this lesson.

Alliteration, Assonance, Consonance, Onomatopoeia

1. Rhyme, based as it is on correspondence of sounds, is related to assonance and alliteration which we shall consider now. Read the lines given below. What do you observe about the sound patterns in each of these lines?

"In a summer season when soft was the sun"
"Piers Plowman"

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow follow'd free;"
"Rime of the Ancient Mariner"
S. T. Coleridge

"Nay, barren are the mountains and spent the streams;"
"Nightingales" Robert Bridges

"Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;"
"Sailing to Byzantium" Wm. B. Yeats

What name is given to the repetition of initial, identical consonant sounds or vowel sounds in successive or associated words or syllables?

2. Read the passages below and see if you can detect any sound pattern in the vowels.

"Here at the small field's ending pause
Where the chalk wall falls to the foam, and its tall ledges."
"Look Stranger on This Island Now"
Auden

"To feel creep up the curving east
The earthly chill of dust and slow."
"You, Andrew Marvell" Macleish

"And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep."
"Eve of St. Agnes" Keats

The repetition of a vowel sound, followed by different consonant sounds in the stressed syllables of other words nearby is called assonance.

3. Consonance is the repetition of consonant sounds within words. Consonance is similar to alliteration except that consonance doesn't limit the repeated sound to the initial letter of a word. Find examples of consonance in the passages below.

"But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,"
"Crossing the Bar" Tennyson

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages."
"Cymbeline" Shakespeare

". . . the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity"
"It Is a Beauteous Evening" Wordsworth

Find examples of alliteration, assonance, and consonance in the following passage. How do alliteration and consonance seem to enhance each other in this passage?

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.
"Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"
Thomas Gray

4. Some words in our language are particularly useful to the poet because the sound of the word suggests the sound make by the object or actions described. Such a device is called onomatopoeia. Select the words from the passages below, the sound of which suits the sense.

Hear the sledges with the bells,
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
"The Bells" Poe

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!
"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"
S. T. Coleridge

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed in the
dark inn yard.
"The Highwayman" Noyes

Rhythm and Meter

You know what rhythm is in music or dancing. In speech, too, it refers to a kind of motion, in which stressed and unstressed sounds create rising and falling patterns. Rhythm in speech may be strongly marked and regular, as it is in nursery rhymes, or it may be barely noticeable and irregular. All speech is somewhat rhythmical. In these very words of explanation some of the sounds are read with more emphasis than others, and certain things, such as punctuation, help set up rhythmical patterns by slowing or stopping the words.

Meter refers to rhythm, but is not the same thing. Meter means a way of measuring and marking off rhythm, and usually implies a certain amount of regularity. Speech which has a beat, in which accents seem to appear at regular intervals, is metrical.

Like rhyme, rhythm and meter are ways in which poetry appeals to us through sound. Such sounds of poetry may be the most directly experienced devices in poetry. For example, we may sometimes have to study a metaphor to really understand or appreciate it, but we can hear and feel rhythm without analyzing it at all, really without understanding it. If we hear poetry read in a language foreign to us, we can sense the rhythm of the language without understanding what the words mean.

For this reason rhythm is a very important part of the poet's art. By skillful use of rhythm the poet can both give us pleasure, as a musician does, and make a very direct appeal to our emotions which respond to that rhythm.

It comes naturally to us to pick out the regularities of accent in speech. When we talk we normally give a stronger emphasis to some sounds than to others. For this reason, when you are examining the meter of a particular poem, you will begin by simply reading the words and listening to which sounds you accent naturally.

Although you can experience rhythm and meter in poetry without knowing names to give to different kinds of meter, some knowledge of formal terms will help you to talk about it. This will help you see when a poet is using exactly regular meter, when he is not, when he is repeating and when he is not, and some of the reasons he uses meter as he does.

Even when he uses a very regular metrical scheme, the good poet will use it so well that you will not always be aware of its regularity. In bad verse, a thumping, regular beat will often overcome the poem. You will find yourself reading such verse as if you were pounding every other word with a club. This is not bad because it is regular, but because it is boring and unnatural. The sing-song or thumping meter virutally takes the music and sense out of language. A good poet may sometimes use a strong, repetitious beat for a reason, but if there seems to be no purpose to the meter except to use it as a sort of club, the writer is probably not a good poet.

The basic units of metrical measurement are the foot and the line. The metrical foot usually consists of one accented syllable with one or two, and occasionally three unaccented syllables. Here, a curved line will be used to mark unaccented syllables, and a straight, horizontal line will mark accented ones. Divisions between feet will be marked with a slanted line. Read the following examples aloud and notice how the position of the accented syllable differs.

Foot	Meter	Example
Iamb	Iambic	$\overset{\smile}{\text{a}}$ /$\overline{\text{long}}$
Trochee	Trochaic	$\overline{\text{light}}$/$\overset{\smile}{\text{ly}}$
Anapest	Anapestic	$\overset{\smile}{\text{in}}$/$\overset{\smile}{\text{dis}}$/$\overline{\text{tinct}}$
Dactyl	Dactylic	$\overline{\text{mu}}$/$\overset{\smile}{\text{si}}$/$\overset{\smile}{\text{cal}}$
Spondee	Spondaic	$\overline{\text{light}}$/$\overline{\text{house}}$

In addition, sometimes you will find a metrical foot of only one, accented syllable, and sometimes, especially where there is a cluster of small, comparatively unimportant words, such as "at the", you will need to mark a two syllable unaccented foot called a Pyrrhic foot. A foot containing only one, accented syllable is called a Monosyllabic foot.

Mark the stressed and unstressed syllables in the following words and decide which type of foot each word illustrates.

1. downtown
2. syllable
3. enjoy
4. listen
5. introduce

A larger unit of metrical measurement than the foot is the line. Examine the following lines of poetry and mark the stressed and unstressed syllables. Draw a slanted line between each foot. The first line has been marked as an illustration.

A. (1) $\overset{\smile}{\text{That}}$ $\overset{-}{\text{time}}$ / $\overset{\smile}{\text{of}}$ $\overset{-}{\text{year}}$ / $\overset{\smile}{\text{thou}}$ $\overset{-}{\text{mayst}}$ / $\overset{\smile}{\text{in}}$ $\overset{-}{\text{me}}$ / $\overset{\smile}{\text{be}}\overset{-}{\text{hold}}$

(2) When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang

(3) Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
(p. 62, Immortal Poems)

B. (1) Tiger, tiger, burning bright

(2) In the forests of the night,

(3) What immortal hand or eye

(4) Could frame thy fearful symmetry?
(p. 234, Immortal Poems)

C. (1) Good-bye, my Fancy!

(2) Farewell, dear mate, dear love!

(3) I am going away, I know not where,

(4) Or to what fortune, or whether I may ever see you again,

(5) So Good-bye, my Fancy.
(p. 424, Immortal Poems)

1. How many feet are there in line A-2? What kind of foot? The metrical line is named by the predominant kind, and by the number of feet in it. Monometer, dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, hexameter, heptameter, octameter, are the names for lines containing from one to eight feet respectively. A four foot line, predominantly iambic, would be called iambic tetrameter, and so on. What kind of line appears in example A?

2. Of the three examples, which is the most regular metrically? Which is the least regular?

3. In which example is the meter most noticeable? Does it seem to add to the meaning of the stanza in any way?

4. In example C, which line has the most feet? How does Whitman, in this brief example, seem to use line length and metrical feet to emphasize the sense of what he says?

5. Example B is a stanza out of a longer poem by Blake. Why do you think he chose to vary the meter in the fourth line? There may be several reasons.

6. Example A contains many words of one syllable. Do you notice anything significant in which words are accented?

7. Do lines C-1 and C-5 have the same number of syllables? The same number of feet?

8. How many kinds of feet can you find in example C? Identify them.

A complete study of rhythm and meter would be too extensive to cover here. As you tried to scan the above examples you probably noticed that sometimes it is difficult to decide whether or not a syllable is accented, for there are different degrees of stress in sounds which cannot fully be accounted for in such a clear-cut system. The number of syllables in a line also plays a part in the meter which is not always measured by the number of feet in a line. But when you are studying other poems and examining the meter the poet has used, a combination of some technical knowledge and your own ear for rhythm in speech should certainly be sufficient both for understanding and pleasure.

Later you will have an opportunity to apply all the material in this unit to further study of poetry. It is important, of course, to remember what you have learned here about the poet's technique. But it is also important to remember that giving names to poetic devices is only useful when combined with your own ability to recognize the meaning of these devices, which comes from your own experience, whether it is experience with people, seasons, emotions, or pure sound.

Student Version

Poetry - Unit II

Introduction

The poems in this unit require more careful analysis than those in Unit I. In these poems, try to see the total structure or form of a poem. Each poem clearly represents a principle central to the consideration of literature: a work of art--here specifically a literary work of art--is a delicate blending of subject, form, and point of view.

You have seen, for example, what an image is and how and why a poet employs it. But form in poetry is more than separate devices; it is the overall pattern of a poem, and how all the separate devices work together. In the poems which follow, try to see the operation within a single poem of all the form aspects you have studied. In addition, try to see the larger units into which a poem is organized. Look particularly to see which patterns are repeated, and try to see why. See what makes a stanza; is it just a breaking of the lines by a space or does it represent something more? Consider why some poems have lines all the same length and some do not. Look for whole units of rhyme patterns, and notice where the rhyme patterns change within a poem. These are just a few of the more general questions related to overall form in poetry.

When you are able to see how such form works with the content of a poem, and how it does so more completely or effectively in some poems than in others, you will be able to answer part of the long-debated and never completely resolved question of what makes a work of art.

These first examples are all sonnets, and illustrate in different degrees the elements of form considered in Unit I, and those mentioned above. Perhaps you will be surprised at the variety in poems which are all, according to their form, sonnets. Try to see, in each case, how the poet has created a unique poem in a conventional form; that is, how he has found freedom of expression within limitations.

Sonnet 73

(1) That time of year thou mayst in me behold
(2) When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
(3) Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
(4) Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
(5) In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
(6) As after sunset fadeth in the west;
(7) Which by and by black night doth take away,
(8) Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
(9) In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
(10) That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
(11) As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
(12) Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
(13) This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
(14) To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

-William Shakespeare-

Student assignments for discussion:

1. Write a simple and clear paraphrase of the poem.

2. Remember that an image is a sensory impression. Do the visual images make up a complete picture? Do they seem to progress in a visual order?

3. Consider the images individually. Why do they have in common? When you have established the common quality of all the images, do they seem to establish any particular theme?

4. In the first line, the speaker refers to "That time of year." Is time an element in any other images in the poem? Would it make any difference if the major images in each stanza were changed around?

5. Do any of the major images suggest other images? Explain. Do such suggestions seem to disrupt the unity of the images, make them more interesting, simply supplement them, make up their own order or what? For example, how many meanings can you give to "Bare ruin'd choirs?" (line 4)

6. Explain line twelve.

7. The commas in line two separate items in a series. How do the comma pauses contribute to the meaning of the line? Read the line aloud, with exaggerated emphasis on the pauses, to see how the line sounds.

8. Why is there a comma after "cold" in line three, and after "choirs" in line four?

9. Letter the rhymes in the poem, and then see if the rhyme patterns can be readily divided into parts. For example, are any of the end sounds in the first four lines repeated later; or in the next four?

10. A four-line stanza of poetry is called a quatrain. If the quatrains in this poem are marked by their rhyme patterns, how else are they divided from each other? Consider thought, images, punctuation, or any other pattern apparent in the divisions of the poem.

11. In what ways are the quatrains alike? In what ways different? Again, consider both form and content. Do they seem to build on each other, or to stand complete independently? Again consider the question of arrangement. Do the quatrains seem to progress in any way?

12. Read the poem aloud. What words do you tend to stress in each line? How many stresses does each line have? What general pattern of stress do you see in the entire poem? The pattern you should recognize is called iambic pentameter. Your teacher will help you work out this pattern.

13. Does the regular rhythmic pattern and line length contribute to the enjoyment of the poem? Is it appropriate to the content? Explain your opinion.

14. Reread the poem. Does the narrator's emotion in the first twelve lines become stronger, remain the same, or diminish?

15. The last two lines form a couplet because of the rhyme in the two adjacent lines. In what ways besides rhyme pattern are these last two lines set off from the rest of the poem? Does the couplet differ in feeling or content from the preceding twelve lines?

16. What do you think is the meaning of the couplet? Support your opinion by pointing out other things in the poem. Consider, for example, why the speaker addresses himself to another person. Is it possible to identify this person within the context of the poem?

Sonnet 65

In some ways this sonnet is more complicated than the preceding one. For one thing, the images do not form such a clear visual picture. However, the development of a single theme through various images is seen in this sonnet as well as Sonnet 73, and your understanding of the first example will help you to understand this one.

(1) Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
(2) But sad mortality o'er-sways their power,
(3) How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
(4) Whose action is no stronger than a flower?

(5) Oh, how shall summer's honey breath hold out
(6) Against the wreckful siege of battering days,
(7) When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
(8) Nor gates of steel so strong, but Time decays?

(9) O fearful meditation! Where, alack,
(10) Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
(11) Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
(12) Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?

(13) Oh, none, unless this miracle have might,
(14) That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

--William Shakespeare

Student Assignments:

1. Look at the poem to see if it has the same characteristics of form as the preceding sonnet. Which ones are they?

2. List the major images and see if they have any literal similarities. Can the images in the poem be divided into groups in any way?

3. Again considering the major images of the poem, what theme do they seem to reiterate?

4. Relate the meanings or suggestions of the images, and their groupings, to the technical form of the poem. That is, how does the organization of the poem, in stanzas, lines, rhyme scheme, reflect what is being said?

5. Paraphrase the attitude of the speaker in each quatrain. Then compare and contrast the content of each. How does each one reflect a progression or variation on the theme? Point to specific words or phrases to support your observations.

6. How might line nine be recognized as a climactic line? Can you see any significance in having an exclamation mark in line nine? How do the other punctuation marks indicate how this line should be read?

7. What shift of attitude does the speaker express in the final couplet? How many distinctly different attitudes are there in the poem? How many structural divisions of the poem are there?

8. Can you see four parts to the Shakespearean sonnet? Figure out the rhyme scheme. What sort of poetic foot seems to dominate the poem?

9. Write a short essay in which you attempt to justify how the stanza form, the rhyme scheme, and the rhythm help communicate what it is the sonnet says. Include a brief, informal definition of what the Shakespearean sonnet is.

Sonnet 29

Student Assignments:

1. The lines in the following Shakespearean sonnet have been purposely placed out of order so that you may practice organizing the rhyme and thought pattern. Briefly, the poet expresses a dissatisfaction with himself and then comes upon a sudden realization that changes his attitude. The couplet sets up a counter notion to what was said earlier in the poem. This pattern was a favorite structural device used by Shakespeare. Rewrite the poem as it should be, keeping in mind the necessary rhyme pattern of a Shakespearean sonnet.

Sonnet 29

I all alone beweep my outcast state,
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising--
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.
Haply I think on thee: and then my state,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Like the lark at break of day arising
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
With what I most enjoy contented least;

Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
Featured like him, like him with friends possest.
From sullen earth, sing hymns at heaven's gate;

PETRARCHAN SONNETS

"Lucifer in Starlight"

(1) On a starred night Prince Lucifer arose.
(2) Tired of his dark dominion, swung the field
(3) Above the rolling ball, in cloud part screened,
(4) Where sinners hugged their specter of repose.
(5) Poor prey to his hot fit of pride were those.
(6) And now upon his western wing he leaned.
(7) Now his huge bulk o'er Afric's sands careened,
(8) Now the black planet shadowed Arctic snows.
(9) Soaring through wider zones that pricked his scars
(10) With memory of the old revolt from Awe,
(11) He reached a middle height, and at the stars,
(12) Which are the brain of heaven, he looked, and sank.
(13) Around the ancient track marched, rank on rank,
(14) The army of unalterable law.

--George Meredith

Student Assignments:

1. This poem is an example of the Petrarchan sonnet form. As you study it, try to pinpoint basic differences between it and Shakespeare's Sonnet 65. Undoubtedly you realize that the Lucifer mentioned in the poem is that same angel who, according to the Bible, challenged God's authority and, as a result, was cast into hell to rule over sinners. This is the same Lucifer as in Milton's famous epic Paradise Lost. The name Lucifer means "bringer of light" for before his fall Lucifer was associated with bright perfection, just as, after the fall, he is seen as dark chaos incarnate. That he is chaos and evil incarnate means that Lucifer is a physical embodiment of these qualities. Because he dared challenge God, in literature this Prince of Evil is generally associated with the sin of excessive pride. Read Meredith's poem carefully and see how some of this background material is reflected in the work. Try to state, in one or two sentences, the basic idea of the sonnet.

2. What do the first four lines tell us about Lucifer? What is he doing and why do you think he is doing it? What figure is the "rolling ball" in line three? How would you interpret line four? What does the author achieve by making specific references to "Afric's sands" and "Arctic snows"? Line eight contains a metaphor, comparing Lucifer to a black planet. What does it do to the earth? Can you see why the author might want to convey such a visual image to his readers? What qualities of Lucifer do the first eight lines stress?

3. In line nine where is Lucifer in relation to earth? Where do you think he is going and for what reason? Is there any place in the poem that indicates a Divine force will stop him? What word in the poem is synonymous with God or divine force? Specifically what causes him to sink back to his proper domain? What line of the last six seems most significant?

4. In what way does this poem seem to have two sections? Turn to Shakespeare's Sonnet 65. How many sections does it seem to have? List the rhyme patterns in each. How do they differ? Your teacher will explain other possibilities for the last six lines of the Petrarchan sonnet.

5. What do you notice, other than rhyme, about the endings of most lines? How do the line endings work rhythmically, or according to to the sense of the poem?

6. Notice the commas after "heaven" (line 11), "looked" (line 11), "marched" (line 13), "rank" (line 13). How do these commas relate to the manner in which these lines should be read? How does such a reading contribute to the meaning?

"Composed Upon Westminster Bridge"
September 3, 1802

(1) Earth has not anything to show more fair:
(2) Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
(3) A sight so touching in its majesty:
(4) This city now doth like a garment wear
(5) The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
(6) Ships, towers, domes, theaters, and temples lie
(7) Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
(8) All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
(9) Never did sun more beautifully steep
(10) In his first splendor valley, rock, or hill:
(11) Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
(12) The river glideth at his own sweet will:
(13) Dear God! the very houses seem asleep.
(14) And all that mighty heart is lying still!

--William Wordsworth

Student Assignments:

1. What kind of sonnet is this poem? How can this poem be divided into two units of thought? To whom is the narrator referring in line two by the pronoun "he"? Why do you think Wordsworth included this line?

2. What word in the first four lines suggests that the author may be surprised at what he sees? Where is this reinforced later in the poem?

3. What is the first thing that impresses him about the city?

4. Line four seems to run smoothly into line five without interruption. Can you see any reason for this, particularly after reading line six? How might the commas in line six serve a purpose in addition to the basic one of separating items in a series? Read line six aloud. How do the sounds of these words contribute to the picture in that line?

5. Read the final six lines of the poem. What helps tie them together? Do they help reinforce the ideas of the previous eight lines? Is there any break in the thought development of this sonnet?

6. What is the "mighty heart" in this poem?

7. What is the poet trying to say in this poem? Before answering, consider the various elements of nature he has brought out.

8. How can you justify this sonnet form as a suitable form for Wordsworth's ideas?

The preceding sonnets have been fairly regular in thier use of the sonnet form and the development of content. "Lucifer in Starlight" might be called a visual poem, but the others, although visual in content, seem to be marked by a meditative quality. Although certain relations between the sonnet form and the nature of content seem predictable, or at least customary, the poet actually has a great deal of freedom in his use of the form. The following two sonnets will show you what two modern poets have done with the form. Read them carefully to see both how the poets have used convention and how they have varied from it, at least as much of convention as you can see in the preceding poems.

"The End of the World"
by Archibald MacLeish (See Immortal Poems, p. 55

Student Assignments:

1. What is the overall image in the poem? How would you characterize the images in general? Are they funny, grotesque, realistic?

2. Consider such words or phrases in the poem as "Quite unexpectedly," "was lighting," "was engaged in," "while," and "was about to." How do these give all the actions in the poem a common characteristic?

3. With what might you equate the overall image of the poem? That is, what does the circus metaphor suggest other than itself? Explain this also in terms of your answer to questions number two.

4. Is the Poem Shakespearean or Petrarchan in sonnet form? In the divisions in thought or imagery? Consider meter, rhyme scheme, stanzaic patterns. Does the content of the poem take a turn, or make a change at any point? Is there any progression evident in the images? Compare the relation of form to content in this sonnet to that in Shakespeare's Sonnet 29.

5. In the last six lines, how does repetition reinforce the sense of what is being said? Look for repetition of words, or sentence structure, including punctuation.

6. State in one or two sentences the idea of the poem. Of what characteristic, or characteristics, of the sonnet form has MacLeish made particularly good use?

"Sonnet to My Mother"
by George Barker (See Immortal Poems, p. 601)

Student Assignments:

1. By now you should be familiar enough with the sonnet form to see that although this sonnet is irregular in certain ways it is more like one type of sonnet than another. Is the sonnet more like the Petrarchan form or the Shakespearean? List the ways in which this sonnet is like and unlike the form you choose. Since it is not regular, do you think Barker is justified in calling the poem a sonnet? Why?

2. What sort of a picture of the poet's mother is given in the first eight lines? How does his selection of images make the picture of her different than a literal description would be? That is, there might be hundreds of different things he could say to describe his mother. Does she seem to be a symbol of anything?

3. What new information is given in the last six lines of the poem? How does this affect the picture you have of the poet's mother? Do you feel sorry for her? Admire her? How do these last six lines add to any symbolic meaning the woman seems to have in the first eight lines?

4. What is the poet saying in the last two lines? How does the repetition of sound in the two words, "mourning" and "morning" reinforce what he says?

5. In how many ways is this a poem developed by contrasts? Look for contrasting words, stanzaic divisions, images.

Although the sonnet form seems to be useful in giving a pattern to a poet's ideas, and is particularly useful in controlling a poem which begins with a statement or presentation of a theme, progresses with variations on that theme, and ends with some sort of revelation, turn, or commentary on the theme, the exact form is somewhat arbitrary. That is, a poet might do much the same thing in a fifteen line poem, or he might use a final, four line stanza to make a comment in the way a couplet can. Many elements of the sonnet form are seen in other lyric poems which are not sonnets at all.

When you read the following poems, remember the things you have seen about the relationships between overall form and content. Look at each of the poems and see what sort of, or how much of, a pattern the poet has imposed on his material. In a good poem, you should be able to recognize some sort of pattern which the poet has used with good reason, and to understand why he has used this pattern, although it may be one which you have never seen. Particularly look at how the poet divides the poem and the lines, when he uses rhyme and when he does not; look at which things he repeats, images, words, or whole lines or stanzas; see how he varies the length of lines and stanzas, and meter.

Song

Go and catch a falling star,
        Get with child a mandrake root,
Tell me where all past years are,
        Or who cleft the devil's foot,
Teach me to hear mermaids' singing,
        Or to keep off envy's stinging,
                And find
                What wind
Serves to advance an honest mind.

If thou be'st born to strange sights,
        Things invisible go see,
Ride ten thousand days and nights,
        Till Age snow white hairs on thee;
Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell me
        All strange wonders that befell thee,
                And swear
                No where
Lives a woman true and fair.

If thou find'st one, let me know;
        Such a pilgrimage were sweet,
Yet do not; I would not go,
        Though at next door we might meet.
Though she were true when you met her,
And last till you write your letter,
                Yet she
                Will be
False, ere I come, to two or three.

--John Donne

If you read Donne's poem carefully you should have little trouble understanding what he says, for he says it in direct, outright statements. A mandrake is a plant, the root of which is sometimes said to resemble the human form. "Cleft" means to split, as some animals' hooves are split. The only other word which might confuse you is "fair" at the end of the second stanza, for although we commonly use it to mean something like honest, here it probably means beautiful, although it might mean both.

Student Assignments:

1. What sort of sentence is the first stanza? What is the common characteristic of the tasks the speaker asks the implied "you" to do?

2. If you agree that it is impossible to "catch a falling star" what do you think the poet is saying about envy, or "an honest mind?" Can you see any reason why he arranges the images in the first stanza in the order he does?

3. Mark the pattern of the rhyme scheme in stanza one. How do the rhymes mark divisions within the stanza? How do the rhymes slow or speed the reading of the lines? Do you think "Song" is a good title for the poem?

4. How is the second stanza like the first? Look at content and formal pattern. How is it different? Does the content, or what the speaker asks the "thou" to do, seem more exaggerated than what he asks in the first stanza? (This method of exaggeration for effect is called hyperbole.)

5. The last three lines of each stanza have the same rhyme scheme, and corresponding parallel lines in the different stanzas have the same number of syllables, with the exception of the one-syllable less in "Lives a woman true and fair." How does this repetition of formal pattern supplement the sense of the poem? When you read the last three lines of the last stanza are you reminded of the last three lines of the earlier two stanzas?

6. Can you see any logical progression in the stanzas? That is, might they be arranged, just as well, in reverse order? Why or why not?

7. What do you think Donne is saying in this poem? Try to answer in such a way as to account for all the images, not just the ones in the last stanza.

8. Do you think Donne is being serious? Half-serious? That is, how would you characterize the tone of the poem? Point out elements of form and content to support your answer.

9. Compare the development of each stanza individually to the development of either the Petrarchan or Shakespearean sonnet. Compare the development of the whole poem to the sonnet forms.

"Upon Julia's Clothes"

(1) Whenas in silks my Julia goes,
(2) Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows
(3) The liquefaction of her clothes.

(4) Next, when I cast mine eyes, and see
(5) That brave vibration, each way free,
(6) O, how that glittering taketh me!

--Robert Herrick

"Brave" in line five here means showy, in a fine or admirable way. "Liquefaction," as you can probably understand from the context and the sound of the word, means turning to liquid. This is a poem in which sound plays an important part; it would be a good idea to try reading the poem slowly aloud, to see if it seems to give you any particular mood or feeling before you analyze the contents more specifically.

Student Assignments:

1. Do you think "silks" in the first line is primarily a visual image or a sound image? Why does the poet say "methinks" instead of "I. . . see" as in the fourth line?

2. Identify the basic metaphor in the first three lines.

3. Do the end rhymes in the first three lines seem to support what is being said? Which sounds in the words at the ends of the three lines are repeated within the lines? Does the repetition occur in important words?

4. What is the meaning of the last three lines? How do the last three lines show action which goes beyond what happens in the first three?

5. There are at least four ways in which the poem is divided into two parts. List these ways. Imagine that the poem is so composed that it makes up a single unit, without divisions. What would be lost in such an arrangement?

6. Do you think the poem is a very serious one? Is it merely descriptive? Does it tell something about the speaker's feelings? If so, what is it?

"The Tiger"

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forest of the night
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And, when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand and what dread feet?

What the hammer? What the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? What dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see?
Did He who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

--William Blake

Student Assignments:

1. Clearly the tiger itself is the central image in Blake's poem. You will need to look at the related imagery, or the terms in which he refers to the Tiger, to see what the poem means. What do the words "fearful symmetry" in the fourth line mean? Is there any contrast between the two words, or does there seem to be anything unusual about placing the ideas of fear and design next to each other?

2. What is the question asked in stanza two? What is the "fire" of the tiger's eyes symbolic of?

3. How does stanza three continue the question "What the hand dare seize the fire?" in stanza two. Look at stanza four and define

the continuous metaphor being built up in these first four stanzas.

4. How does stanza five clarify the questions asked in the preceding stanzas? Do the first four stanzas seem to repeat the same or parallel questions? What is asked in stanza five?

5. What contrast, besides that between tiger and lamb, is set up in the line "Did He who made the lamb make thee?"

6. Why do you think Blake repeats the first stanza at the end of the poem?

7. Are the questions asked answered in the poem? What is the basic statement of the poem? Now, reconsider the words "fearful symmetry." Do they seem to mean more to the whole poem than they did the first time you read them?

8. Would you call the tiger a symbol? To what, besides the tiger, might the words "fearful symmetry" apply?

9. Do you think the poem might be as much about the nature of the tiger's creator as about the tiger itself? Why could stanza five not be shifted to an earlier point in the poem?

10. Mark the rhyme scheme of the poem. Are the rhymes generally stressed, or end-stopped? Read a part of the poem aloud. Do the rhyme scheme and meter work together to give a highly regular or irregular effect? Does the poem seem choppy; is the rhyme and metrical scheme boring? How do rhyme and meter reflect the content of this poem?

11. Can you think of any reasons for the division of the poem into stanzas? Do the stanzas mark changes in the rhyme pattern, images, or thought?

All of the preceding examples have been divided clearly into parts through the use of stanzas or other dividing devices. These stanzas have been, in some way, complete in themselves, and often one stanza will repeat, in a different way, some of what another stanza says. Formal elements of overall pattern are important cues to what is being said in a poem, and to how the content is organized. But not all poems are divided into stanzas, and not all poems make use of regular formal patterns or will only use formal patterns to a certain extent. Again keeping in mind what you have learned about form and subject in the preceding examples, look for overall form in the following poems. See what devices the author has used to shape his material. Try to discover how he has used form, pattern, design, to give pleasure and to support the sense of the poem, to organize and to unify, to emphasize and to set up comparisons and contrasts.

"My Last Duchess"

by Robert Browning

(See p. 402, *Immortal Poems*)

1. Before you read "My Last Duchess" read the vocabulary aids given below:

Title-Ferrara:	A city in the Po Valley of Italy, ruled for many centuries by one of the oldest families in Europe, the Estes. The time of "My Last Duchess" is probably the sixteenth century when the Renaissance Period was almost over.
Title-last:	most recent
line 6-Fra Pandolf:	an imaginary painter. "Fra" is Italian for friar.
line 25-favor:	token worn by a beloved to identify to whom she is pledged.
line 56-Claus of Innsbruck:	an imaginary sculptor. Innsbruck, Austria, during the sixteenth century was the home of a famous school of artists excelling in bronzework.

2. "My Last Duchess" is a *dramatic monologue*. What are the characteristics of a dramatic monologue? The limitations of the dramatic monologue present serious difficulties to the poet. Why?

3. Answer the following questions dealing with subject?
   a. Who is the speaker?
   b. Who is addressed?
   c. Who is the object of the speaker's comments?
   d. What conversation has apparently preceded the monologue?
   e. What kind of person does the Duke appear to be? What kind of person is he? What kind of irony is this?
   f. What is the significance of the word *last* in the title?
   g. Characterize the last Duchess. What was her greatest weakness?
   h. What happened to her? That is, why is she no longer around? Support your answer by referring to lines from the poem.
   i. Do you think the monologue before the portrait was planned?
   j. What do you think is the significance of the Duke's reference to the bust of Neptune?

4. Select the images which you consider to be most significant and effective. Describe in some detail the setting as you visualize it from the images the poet offers.

5. Identify the rhyme which dominates the poem. Observe the lines carefully. Do the thoughts generally terminate at the ends of the lines or in the middle? What effect does this have on the rhyme? Does it make the rhyme less obvious? How does the use of rhyme still act as an effective poetic device when there is no correspondence between thought units and rhyme? Explain.

"Ulysses"

by Alfred, Lord Tennyson (See p. 375, Immortal Poems.)

Student Assignments:

1. Who was Ulysses? In The Odyssey, how does Homer picture Ulysses after he arrives home safely after ten years of wandering?

2. How does Tennyson's view of the aging Ulysses differ from Homer's view? You will be able to make the comparison more easily if you answer the following questions concerning the poem's subject:
   - (a) Does Ulysses find his life as an "idle king" to be a profitable and satifying one?
   - (b) What does Ulysses say he must continue to do?
   - (c) "I am a part of all that I have met," says Ulysses. The poet tells us about many of the hero's adventures. List as many of these as you can.
   - (d) What responsibility does he give to his son?
   - (e) What does he call upon his mariners to do?

3. (a) What kind of a person is Ulysses? Be able to defend your answer by referring to specific lines in the poem.
   - (b) What kind of a person is Telemachus?
   - (c) What kind of men are the mariners?

4. Tennyson tells us that Ulysses and his mariners are setting sail once more, but Ulysses says that he is ". . . yearning in desire/To follow knowledge like a sinking star, /Beyond the utmost bound of human thought." Does this lead you to believe that this poem is more than a simple narrative of Ulysses? What does the poem really seem to be about?

5. This poem is interesting not only because of its total meaning, but also because of individual lines which, in a sense, have a dual purpose. They contribute to the poem's total meaning and are, when removed from the text, challenging comments for individual reflection. Select one of the passages below and write a paragraph stating what the line means to you. Consider the line apart from the background provided by the poem.
   - (a) I am a part of all that I have met.
   - (b) As though to breathe were life
   - (c) Life piled on life/Were all too little
   - (d) last three lines

6. Who is the speaker in the poem? Do you think the speaker is sitting or standing? Where is he? Describe the setting as completely as you can, but do not include anything which is not stated directly or clearly hinted at in the poem.

7. When did you first realize that Ulysses was actually speaking to someone?

8. "Ulysses" is a particular type of poem called a dramatic monologue. What characteristics of the dramatic monologue which you saw in the Browning poem are apparent here as well? Look up "monologue" in the dictionary. Consider what meaning the word "dramatic" adds to monologue.

9. If you were watching the poet's technique carefully, you might have observed that there is no end rhyme pattern. Ask your teacher to give you the technical name for a poem which consists of unrhymed lines of ten syllables, the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and tenth of which are accented.

10. Tennyson tells the reader that "experience is an arch." Experience, of course, is not really an arch, but the poet uses language in a figurative way. What figure of speech is employed here? Why does this figure of speech function effectively in light of the total poem?

11. Poets sometimes substitute one idea for another closely related idea, or part of something is used to represent the whole. In "The Highwayman," Alfred Noyes says there is "death at every window." He really means there is a gun at every window. This poetic device is called metonymy. See how many examples of metonymy you can find in "Ulysses."

12. In question nine, you observed the metrical pattern. How does this pattern strengthen or reinforce the meaning.

13. "Ulysses" is a dramatic monologue and as such lends itself to dramatization. Do you feel that anything would need to be added to allow you to present an effective scene?

"The Hollow Men"

by T. S. Eliot (see page 539, Immortal Poems)

In some ways "The Hollow Men" is similar to a dramatic monologue. The speaker or speakers tell you about themselves, their situation, and reveal all you need to know to understand the poem. But here you will find that it is sometimes harder to name a literal speaker, to describe an actual event or scene, than it is in the preceding poems.

When you read the following poem, identify as much as you can of character, and setting, and of the literal actions of the poem, but more important look for the similarities in different things. Try to see how differing images have similar emotional connotations.

Eliot believed that the poet could use objects or events in poetry to evoke emotional response which the poet could not simply tell the reader to feel. For example, read the following group of words: "wind," "dry grass," "rats' feet," "broken glass," "dry cellar." These words make up most of three lines in the first stanza. You might say that the poem is telling you about rats running across broken bottles in someone's basement. But this is not really what is happening.

The words are part of a figure of speech comparing the whisper of the hollow men to these things. But again, are these things really like whispers? Do you see how Eliot is evoking a particular emotion by his choice of words and images? How would you describe this emotion?

As you read the whole poem, look for the emotional connotation of the images and try to see how they make up a continuous picture, feeling, progression of ideas. Remember the other poems you have looked at, such as Shakespeare's sonnets. In some of the other poems there may have been a more definite literal picture, and yet the images worked in much the same way as they do here.

Eliot frequently uses quotations from other works as epigraphs for his poems. Here, "Mistah Kurtz--he dead" is a line from a story by Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness. In it a boy is bringing news of the death of the main character. It is enough to know that Kurtz was a man who reverted to a savage and violent life, but who became conscious of the horror of his past before he died. Look for lines in Eliot's poem which might refer to Kurtz or men like him. Guy Fawkes was an Englishman who died on the scaffold in the seventeenth century. He conspired to blow up the British parliament on November 5, 1605. On the anniversary of this date it became a custom to make effigies of Guy Fawkes to be burnt, and for children to beg for pennies for fireworks in his name, hence the meaning of the second epigraph. As you read the poem try to see what Eliot is telling you in these two opening quotations.

Student Assignments:

1. What does the title lead you to expect in the poem? Do you see any connection between the title and the reference to Guy Fawkes Day? Read the first section of the poem and see how many meanings you can suggest for the title.

2. Identify as specifically as possible the following information in the poem:

   a. Who is speaking in section one?
   b. Who is speaking in section two?
   c. What is the setting of each section?
   d. Who are "Those who have crossed/With direct eyes" in section one, stanza three?

3. Read the first stanza of the poem aloud. How do you think the lines would be read? In a natural, conversational voice? Would there be great or little emphasis on the rhythm of the lines? What is the central image which describes the "hollow men" in this first stanza? How could a reading of the stanza aloud help interpret the meaning of the lines? Do the short lines and the line breaks in the middle of sentences contribute to this interpretation? Perhaps your whole class could read this stanza together, reading it as you think the "hollow men" would speak the lines.

4. What are the differences between the contrasted words in stanza two: shape and form; shade and colour; gesture and motion? What effect does the length of these lines, and their being set off from the others, have on the reading of the poem? What does "Paralysed force" mean?

5. Why do you think "Kingdom" is capitalized in the third stanza? What is the difference between "Those who have crossed/With direct eyes" and "the hollow men?" How might "lost/Violent souls" refer to "Mistah Kurtz" and "the Old Guy?"

6. Eliot divides the poem two ways, into sections and into stanzas within the sections. Certain things are repeated within each division but changed or added to. What do the eyes seem to stand for in stanza three of section one? In the first line of section two? Where else do images of eyes or sight appear in the poem? How does the image change or take on new meaning from one division of the poem to another?

7. What does the speaker ask in section two? What does he want to be? What does he not want to do?

8. How many places in the poem is the word "kingdom" used? How is it used differently?

9. Trace the development of the "fading star" image in the poem. Is the star a symbol? What might be its symbolic meaning?

10. Section one states that "We are the hollow men." Section two begins to answer why. How do the words "I dare not" explain, in part, the reason that the "hollow men" are not truly alive--or dead?

11. How does the setting of section three contribute to the meaning of the poem? Does the desert image stand for the spiritual condition of the speakers? What is suggested in the words "stone images" and "supplication"? What does the speaker mean when he says "Is it like this" in the second stanza of section three? Recall the words, "gesture without motion" in stanza two, section one. How are these like the last five lines of section three? ("Waking alone . . .") How are both like the words, "Between the motion/And the act" in the second stanza of section five?

12. What is the difference in meaning between the first two lines of section four? Why is the image of sight important to this section? The last lines are "The hope only/Of empty men." Does this stanza seem to be making a hopeful statement? Why or why not?

13. Eliot often refers to other works not only by quotation but by suggestion and by meter or partial quotation. What is the reference in the first stanza of section five? The last stanza? Does the meaning of the original rhyme compare or contrast effectively with the meaning of the words in Eliot's stanzas? For example, what is the reference equivalent of "the prickly pear?" What is the reference of the first and third lines set off to the right in this last section of the poem? Do you see any other possible references or allusions in the poem? What about "the Shadow" in section five? Remember the valley setting of section four. Does this suggest any allusion in "the Shadow?"

14. Paraphrase briefly the idea of each section of the poem.

15. How do the three stanzas of section five which end in "Falls the Shadow" sum up the idea of the poem?

16. Do you feel that Eliot is making some sort of negative statement or condemnation in this poem? Is he urging some sort of positive action? Would you call this a religious poem in any way ? Justify your answers with reference to specific things in the poem. Consider the meaning of the last stanza of the poem and take into account the allusion to the nursery rhyme.

17. How does Eliot use rhyme and similar sounds to reinforce the meaning of the poem? Illustrate your answer with examples from section two.

18. How does Eliot use repetition of whole words or phrases? Illustrate your answer with examples from sections four and five.

19. What do you think is the whole point of the poem? In short, why do you think someone would want to write about men who are neither very good nor very bad; men whose central trait seems to be their lack of color, life, vitality; in short, their lack of interest?

20. Write a short essay in which you:

(a) compare the relation between form and content in this poem to that in any of the other poems in this unit;

or (b) examine the relationship between form and content in one section of the poem of at least twelve lines in length;

or (c) summarize the way in which you think Eliot uses form to give both pleasure and sense to what the poem says.

NOTE

Following are some study materials for another Eliot poem, "The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock." Unfortunately, the poem is not in the Immortal Poems volume that we are using, and we were unable to get permission to reproduce the poem here in this unit. Perhaps your teacher may be able to find enough copies of the poem in other books so that you can read and enjoy it.

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" by T. S. Eliot

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is also a dramatic monologue. In this twentieth century poem, however, Eliot has used certain elements of the dramatic monologue without rendering the same sort of realistic overall picture as Browning, for example, did. That is, you will be able to identify characters and places in the poem, but there are certain jumps from one image to another which may seem confusing at first. Concentrate instead on the emotions suggested by the images; look for similarities in the images as you would in a shorter lyric poem such as Shakespeare's sonnets. Where there seems to be a jump from one scene to another, perhaps there is really a clear, emotional continuity.

Eliot often uses references to other works of literature. Such a reference is the Italian quotation at the beginning of the poem, a quotation from Dante's Inferno. The general meaning of the quotation is as follows: a burning soul is asked to identify himself and answers, if I thought you would return to earth I wouldn't tell you who I am, but since no one ever returns from here I will. To understand this quotation is not absolutely necessary to understanding the poem, but we can assume that Eliot has used the quotation intentionally, to hint at or tell us something about his poem. As you read "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" ask yourself whether the speaker is identifying himself in any way, or revealing himself. Does he seem to be like a tormented soul in any way?

Student Assignments:

1. What does the title lead you to expect in the poem? Does "Love Song" have the same connotations as "J. Alfred Prufrock"? That is, do the two parts of the title seem to go together?

2. Identify the following specific information in the poem:

   a. Who is the speaker?

   b. What time of day is it? What time of year?

   c. What sort of setting is established at the beginning of the poem? Is there anything in the setting to make you think of a particular country?

   d. Considering the time of day, and the setting, where do you think the speaker might be going? What do you think the "room" might be where "the women come and go" in the second section?

   e. What sort of weather is there?

3. Do the time of day, the weather, the time of year, and the setting seem to add up to any central mood? What is it? Compare these images to those in Shakespeare's Sonnet 73, "That time of year thou mayst in me behold."

4. When the speaker says that the evening is "Like a patient etherised upon a table" what does he mean? Why does he say "Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'/Let us go and make our visit"? Do you think he might be speaking to the reader as well as the "you," or to himself? How are the streets like the "overwhelming question"?

5. Identify the major metaphor in the third section. ("The yellow fog. . . "etc.) What is the same about this metaphor and the simile in the third line of the poem? What sort of mood has the poet established in these first three sections?

6. Look at the first three sections again and see in how many ways they are divided. Look at the rhyme patterns, the content, the imagery, spacing, and line length or meter. Try to find how many ways the formal pattern supports what is said. Why, for example, does line three not rhyme? Which other line in this section does not rhyme? Look at the third section to see, not only the end rhymes, but also what sounds are repeated at the beginnings of lines, or which ones seem most obvious within the lines. Compare the sound structure in this section with that in the first stanza of "Upon Julia's Clothes."

7. Read the entire poem and mark the repetitions of words, images, phrases, or whole lines. Repetition is often a key to the poet's central intention for the simple reason that what is repeated is emphasized. Which stanza is repeated entirely? What line is repeated in the fifth and sixth sections? Why do you think the words, "there will be time" are repeated so many times? Why does the speaker repeat "Do I dare?" in the sixth section? Why does he repeat "They will say"?

8. The speaker says "there will be time" for all sorts of great things. Do you believe him? Does he seem to be the sort of person to "murder and create?" What is the irony in the line, "And time yet for a hundred indecisions"? (section four) What is the difference between the things he says there will be time for in the sixth section, and those in the fourth section? How does the image of "the taking of a toast and tea" serve as a transition between these sections? Does this image help explain "the room [where] the women come and go?" Is there a discrepancy between what these women are doing and what they are talking about? Is this discrepancy similar to that between "time to murder and create" and "time/To wonder, 'Do I dare?'"

9. Look at the repeated words in sections seven, eight, and nine: "And I have known"; "And how should I presume?" Is Prufrock a man of great experience? What are the things he says he has known, in each stanza? Answer by paraphrasing or stating briefly. Is Prufrock a self-conscious man? Do you think he is easily embarrassed? Is he a romantic man? Recall the title of the poem. Why should he call his memory of arts "downed with light brown hair" a digression? What do you think he is asking when he says, "should I then presume?/And how should I begin?" Begin what?

10. What is the metaphor suggested by "a pair of ragged claws?" How is this like the image in the preceding section, of "lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows?"

11. These two short stanzas are set off together. Do they mark any change in the poem? Why, for example, does the next section return to the cat image of the third section? If this cat image suggests sleep, anesthesia, a retreat perhaps, what does this show about the progression of the poem?

12. What does the speaker admit about himself in this twelfth section? What is he afraid of?

13. The next two sections repeat, to a certain extent, the pattern of repetition in the "there will be time" and the "I have known" stanzas. What progression of the poem is reflected simply in these phrases: "there will be time"; "do I dare?"; "I have known"; "should I presume?"; "And would it have been worth it, after all"; "If one. . . should say: 'That is not what I meant at all. /That is not it, at all"?

14. How does the speaker answer his own question, "would it have been worth it," in the "No! I am not Prince Hamlet," section? A central problem in Hamlet's character, and in the play, was Hamlet's inability to make a decision, to decide to act. We consider him a great, tragic figure. How is Prufrock like Hamlet, and how unlike him? How does the speaker describe himself in this section?

15. Look at the last twelve lines of the poem and see how they are different than the ones before. The stanzas are shorter; how does this contribute to the sense of the poem? Does the speaker intend to "disturb the universe" in any way? Does it seem a daring thing "to eat a peach?" The poem began with going somewhere, with a search for an answer to "an overwhelming question?" What, in these final lines, makes you think the speaker has given up the search?

16. What do you think the mermaids stand for? The line, "I do not think that they will sing for me" is set off by itself, almost as an afterthought. How does this contribute to the sense of pathos, of insufficiency, of resignation?

17. Two images which appeared earlier in the poem appear here as well: images of hair, and of the sea. The arms in lamplight were "downed with light brown hair," but Prufrock worried about his own growing baldness. At another point he seemed to wish to submerge himself in the sea, as "a pair of ragged claws." Here the hair and sea imagery is combined. What do you think these images mean? The next to the last stanza has an unusual complexity of similar sounds. Does this contribute to the feeling of involvement? Do you think the sea-hair image represents imagination, the things Prufrock longs for, the things he imagined doing but could never actually do, or what?

18. Why do "we drown" when "human voices wake us" from our imagined lives? Is the contrast set up here one between imagination or dream, and reality?

19. Anyone who has said, tomorrow I'm going to get organized, should be able to understand Prufrock who says, "There will be time." Anyone who has ever wondered what other people thought of him should be able to understand Prufrock who says, "They will say: 'How his hair is growing thin!'" And anyone who has dreamed of doing things he wouldn't really do, and then made excuses for not doing them, will understand Prufrock who says "Would it have been worth it, after all?" Prufrock is certainly no hero, as he himself finally admits. He is what is often called an anti-hero, "indeed, almost ridiculous--/Almost, at times, the Fool." What one might not understand is why anyone would want to write about such a person.

Do you think the poem is enjoyable? Does Prufrock take on any importance? Does he seem great, or tragic? Does he seem human? In short, try to answer the question of why one might write a poem about a "Prufrock."

20. Write a short essay in which you:

(a) compare the relation between form and content in this poem to that in any of the other poems in this unit;

or (b) examine the relationship between form and content in one section of the poem at least twelve lines in length;

or (c) summarize the way in which you think Eliot uses form to give both pleasure and sense to what the poem says.

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OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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TEST

POETRY--PART I

Literature Curriculum V

Instructions to students:

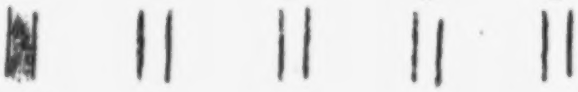
Answers to the questions are to be recorded on the separate answer sheets provided. PLEASE BE SURE TO USE ONLY SIDE A OF THE ANSWER SHEET, THE SIDE THAT HAS ROOM FOR 5 CHOICES.

Use a soft lead pencil (#2 or softer) and completely fill the space between the lines for the response you choose as the correct answer. Your score on this test will be the number of correct answers you mark. There is only one best answer for each item.

Sample test item: Who is the chief executive of the United States Government?
(1) The President
(2) The Secretary of State
(3) The Secretary of Defense
(4) The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Since the correct answer is 1, the answer sheet is marked like this:

Sample test item: 1 2 3 4 5



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TE 000 204

1. Imagery is helpful in poetry primarily because it

   1) allows us to work from basic premises.
   2) helps us to understand the world through our senses.
   3) helps us distinguish prose from poetry.
   4) contributes to the sound of poetry.

2. Which line given below contains the strongest image-producing words?

   1) "The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass"
   2) "The time you won your town the race"
   3) "The stillness in the room"
   4) "I am going away, I know not where,"

3. Of the following groups of words which one should produce the clearest picture in the reader's mind?

   1) on the fifth of June
   2) early in June
   3) a bright, clear day in early June
   4) before mid-June

4. You based your answers to questions (2) and (3) on

   1) the sound of the words.
   2) the length of the line or number of words.
   3) the use of a simile.
   4) the effective use of specific detail.

5. To how many senses do the images in this line appeal? "Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told."

   1) 5
   2) 3
   3) 2
   4) None

6. Which of the following images convey mood or atmosphere?

   a) "And Tom bears logs into the hall,
   And milk comes frozen home in pail"
   b) "Smart lad, to slip betimes away"
   c) "He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
   Close to the sun in lonely lands"
   d) "O'er his white bones when they are bare,
   The wind sall blow for evermair"

   1) None of the above
   2) All of the above
   3) a, c, and d
   4) b only

7. Certain images in "To An Athlete Dying Young" are placed in juxtaposition (next to other images). Which of the following statements do they support most closely?

   1) An athlete's world is the best of all possible worlds.
   2) The youthful death of the athlete was a kind of victory.
   3) The athlete's honors were unjustly won.
   4) Fate is cruel to the athlete who dies prematurely.

8. Which of the following passages contains a simile?

   1) "He (the eagle) clasps the crag with crooked hands;"
   2) "And like a thunderbolt he (the eagle) falls."
   3) "While I nodded nearly napping,
      suddenly there came a tapping,"
   4) "The light that lies
      In woman's eyes,"

9. Which of the following passages does not contain a simile?

   1) "Talent is a cistern; genius is a fountain."
   2) "The green lizard and the golden snake
      Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake."
   3) "I do not know whether my present poems are better than the earlier ones. But this is certain: they are much sadder and sweeter, like pain dipped in honey."
   4) "Silence will fall like dews."

10. The line you should have chosen from question (9) is different from the others in

    1) length.
    2) number of images.
    3) the nature of the comparison.
    4) none of these

11. Which of the following passages contains a metaphor (metaphor here is used in its narrow sense)?

    a) "In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
       It perched for vespers nine;"
    b) "Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
       Nor the furious winter's rage."
    c) "Which by and by black night doth take away,
       Death's second self, that seals up all the rest."
    d) "This city now doth like a garment wear
       The beauty of the morning; silent, bare."

    1) None of the above
    2) All of the above
    3) a, b, and d
    4) b and c

12. Each of the passages below contains a metaphor or a simile; that is, the poet identifies one thing with another thing or talks about one thing in terms of another. In which of the passages below is the identification or comparison different from the other three in a very particular way?

    1) "I tell you the past is a bucket of ashes."
    2) "Thee (autumn) sitting careless on a granary floor,"
    3) "As a white candle
    In a holy place,
    So is the beauty
    Of an agéd face."
    4) "Hope is a tattered flag and a
    dream out of time."

13. The passage you should have selected in question (12) is different from the other passages in

    1) that two things are compared that cannot be compared.
    2) amount of imagery included in the passage.
    3) that a non-human thing is given the characteristic of a human being.
    4) the complete and varied images.

14. Which of the following lines from poems you have read contain personification?

    a) "Seasons of mists and mello fruitfulness,
    Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun:"
    b) "'Tis better to have loved and lost
    Than never to have loved at all."
    c) "Go, lovely rose--
    Tell her that wastes her time and me"
    d) "Parting is all we know of heaven,
    And all we need of hell"

    1) All of the above
    2) a, b, and c
    3) b and d
    4) a and c

15. Which of the following statements most clearly defines symbolism?

    1) A symbol is something that means more than what it is.
    2) A symbol is a substitute.
    3) A symbol is a visual picture made with words.
    4) A symbol is a visual picture that allows the author to express his point of view.

16. In Robert Browning's poem "My Star," the star could not symbolize

    1) the poet's wife.
    2) the poet's disappointment with life.
    3) the poet's poetic genius.
    4) the poet's ambition in life.

17. In William Blake's "The Sick Rose," the rose could not symbolize

    1) the untarnished, perfect love.
    2) the loss of innocence.
    3) the destruction of love.
    4) a flower being eaten by a worm.

18. The term irony implies an incongruity. Such an incongruity is not found in

    1) "The Two Corbies."
    2) "Richard Cory."
    3) "To An Athlete Dying Young."
    4) "My Star."

19. In "Holy Thursday," Blake writes:

    "Is this a holy thing to see
    In a rich and fruitful land,
    Babes reduced to misery
    Fed with cold and usurous hand?"

    What is the paradox?

    1) the sight of unhappiness
    2) that misery and wealth can coexist
    3) that innocent babes should suffer
    4) that civilization permits overpopulation to exist

20. Which line does not contain a paradox?

    1) "The only certain thing in life is death."
    2) "My life closed twice before its close;"
    3) "Our two souls therefore, which are one,"
    4) "I hold you here, root and all, in my hands"

21. Perfectly rhymed words have identical sounds in the stressed vowels and all sounds following, but unlike sounds preceding the stressed vowel. Which pair below are not perfectly rhymed words?

    1) facing, dancing
    2) pursuing, undoing
    3) abiding, residing
    4) retired, admired

Use the stanza below for questions 22 and 23.

"Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
  We people on the pavement looked at him.
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
  Clean favored and imperially slim."

"Richard Cory"

22. In which stanza below is the rhyme scheme most like the stanza above quoted from "Richard Cory"?

1) "And round that early-laurelled head
We'll flock to gaze the strengthless dead,
And find unwithered on its curls
The garland briefer than a girl's"

2) "And though it in the center sit,
  Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans, and hearkens after it,
  And grows erect as that comes home."

3) "I envy not in any moods
  The captive void of noble rage,
  The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:"

4) "So huge, so hopeless to conceive,
  As these that twice befell,
Parting is all we know of heaven,
  And all we need of hell."

23. The most general description of the rhymes in the stanza from "Richard Cory" is

1) internal rhymes.
2) feminine rhymes.
3) end rhymes.
4) imperfect rhymes.

24. The line below which contains an internal rhyme is

1) "In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,"
2) "And their fields are bleak and bare,"
3) "The common fate of all things rare"
4) none of these.

25. Feminine rhyme is found in which following stanza?

1) "And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And, when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand and what dread feat?"

2) "Next, when I cast mine eyes, and see
That brave vibration, each way free,
O, how that glittering taketh me!"

3) "Go and catch a falling star,
Get with child a mandrake root,
Tell me where all past years are,
Or who cleft the devil's foot,
Teach me to hear mermaid's singing,
Or to keep off envy's stinging,
And find
What wind
Serves to advance an honest mind."

4) "To-day, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsman of a stiller town."

26. Locate the stanza below which has an a a b b rhyme scheme.

1) "Jesse had a wife, to mourn all her life,
The children they are brave.
'Twas a dirty little coward shot Master Howard,
And laid Jesse James in his grave."

2) "Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat."

3) "And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow."

4) "I had the swirl and ache
From sprays of honeysuckle
That when they're gathered shake
Dew on the knuckle."

27. Which line does not make use of alliteration to enhance the sound?

1) "The weary, wayworn wanderer bore"
2) "Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns"
3) "And I would that my tongue could utter"
4) "Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair."

28. Which of the following lines from poems you have read contain alliteration?

    a) "Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;
    And yet you will weep and know why."
    b) "And the people they did say, for many miles away."
    c) "To feel creep up the curving east"
    d) "The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,"

    1) All of the above
    2) a, b, and d
    3) c
    4) a, b, and c

29. Assonance in poetry may be used to

    a) knit words together.
    b) give pleasure in repetition.
    c) help establish a mood.
    d) contribute to the musical quality of a line.

    1) All of the above
    2) None of the above
    3) a, b, and c
    4) d only

30. Which of the following lines from poems you have read contains assonance?

    a) "He clasps the crag with crooked hands;"
    b) "Suffer herself to be desired."
    c) "Over Goldengrove unleaving"
    d) "Where the chalk wall fails to the foam, and its tall ledges."

    1) None of the above
    2) All of the above
    3) a, b, and c
    4) d only

31. A device which does not necessarily contribute to the sound of the poem is

    1) consonance.
    2) simile.
    3) onomatopoeia.
    4) assonance.

32. An example of a dactylic foot is

    1) loveliest.
    2) unloved.
    3) lovely.
    4) loved.

33. An example of an iambic foot is

    1) unbelievable.
    2) believe.
    3) believable.
    4) none of these.

34. The iambic pentameter line is

    1) Dear child! Dear Girl! That walkest with me here,
    2) Will no one tell me what she sings?
    3) Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;
    4) On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings

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OREGON CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER

TEST

POETRY--PART II

Literature Curriculum V

Instructions to students:

Answers to the questions are to be recorded on the separate answer sheets provided. PLEASE BE SURE TO USE ONLY SIDE A OF THE ANSWER SHEET, THE SIDE THAT HAS ROOM FOR 5 CHOICES.

Use a soft lead pencil (#2 or softer) and completely fill the space between the lines for the response you choose as the correct answer. Your score on this test will be the number of correct answers you mark. There is only one best answer for each item.

Sample test item: Who is the chief executive of the United States Government?
(1) The President
(2) The Secretary of State
(3) The Secretary of Defense
(4) The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Since the correct answer is 1, the answer sheet is marked like this:

Sample test item:	1	2	3	4	5
	■	▯	▯	▯	▯

TE 000 204

The project reported herein was supported through the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

1. From the following statements select those which are characterisics common to the Shakespearean and Petrarchan sonnet.

    a) Both forms, composed of quatrains, are 16 lines long.
    b) The basic meter of both forms is iambic pentameter.
    c) Both forms require the poet to produce compressed expression within 14 lines.
    d) Both forms are excellent for narration.

    1) All of the above
    2) a, b, and d
    3) b and c
    4) d

2. Which one of the following is the Shakespearean rhyme scheme?

    1) aabb, ccdd, eeff, gg
    2) abba, cddc, effe, gg
    3) abab, cdcd, efef, gg
    4) baba, dcdc, fefe, gg

3. Which one of the following is an example of a Petrarchan rhyme scheme?

    1) abab, cdcd, efef, gg
    2) aabb, aabb-ccd, ddc
    3) abba, abba-cde, dce
    4) baba, baba-ddc, ccd

4. Which of the statements below is not true of "Lucifer in Starlight"?

    1) The ordered, logical universe is too much for Lucifer.
    2) Lucifer accepts this defeat temporarily. He will return and challenge the heavens again.
    3) Lucifer is tired of men and looks to the universe above the earth.
    4) The Lucifer mentioned in this poem is the same Lucifer Milton mentions in Paradise Lost.

5. The sonnet form is appropriate for Wordsworth's "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge" because it

    a) allowed the writer to present a single poetic reaction without having to break his train of thought.
    b) provided a framework that permits the author to speculate upon more than one possible solution.
    c) made it possible for the author to make an informal, unhurried consideration of his problem.
    d) gave the author the opportunity to enhance his thought control through the development of a strict form.

    1) All of the above
    2) a and c
    3) b and c
    4) a and d

6. In "Composed Upon Westminister Bridge," what image does the speaker convey?

    1) He sees himself, the city, and nature as being completely in tune.
    2) He sees the natural beauty of the morning spoiled by the grotesque intrusion of buildings.
    3) He contrasts the evils of the city to the tranquil beauty of nature early in the morning.
    4) He implies that all large cities improve rather than spoil the natural beauty of their surroundings.

7. The images in Shakespeare's Sonnet 73 (That time of year thou mayst in me behold) work in which of the following ways?

    a) They present a visual progression of time passing.
    b) They present a visual picture of light fading.
    c) They imply that one should take life easier when young.
    d) They suggest regret for the loss of one's youth.

    1) All of the above
    2) a, b, and d
    3) b and c
    4) a and d

8. The speaker in "Sonnet to My Mother" would most likely be

    1) a daughter.
    2) the son of a wealthy city family.
    3) a son away at war.
    4) a son who resents his family.

9. Which group of words best describe the attitude of the speaker in "Sonnet to My Mother?"

    1) Observant, but indifferent
    2) Objective, and realistic
    3) Realistic and sensitive
    4) Emotional

10. "Sonnet to My Mother" suggests a Petrarchan sonnet more than a Shakespearian sonnet because

    1) it develops an eight line rhyme pattern followed by a six line pattern.
    2) it is compressed within fourteen lines.
    3) it follows an abab, cdcd, efef, gg rhyme pattern.
    4) it conforms to exact meter and rhyme.

11. In "Sonnet to My Mother," the mother symbolizes

    1) all those who have lost loved ones in war and have abandoned hope.
    2) the best part in all of us that holds out against war's chaos and destruction.
    3) a type of all mothers who are gentle and thoughtful.
    4) those human beings who resist change and cling to the past.

12. If thou find'st one, let me know;
        Such a pilgrimage were sweet,
    Yet do not; I would not go,
        Though at next door we might meet.
    Though she were true when you met her,
    And last till you write your letter,
                Yet she
                Will be
    False, ere I come, to two or three.

The statement made by John Donne in stanza 3 of "Song" (quoted above) is saved from seeming sour and seriously cynical by each of the following devices of sound except

1) the three rhyming last lines, two of which are two-syllable lines.
2) the use of end rhymes throughout.
3) regular correspondence in the number of syllables in parallel lines in the stanza.
4) an abundance of alliteration.

13. Although "Song" is relatively simple, light, and musical, it is clear that the poet is saying something rather serious about

1) the fickleness of women.
2) the difficulties of catching a falling star.
3) the adventures of the open road.
4) the possibility that mermaids can sing.

14. "Upon Julia's Clothes"

Whenas in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows
The liquefaction of her clothes.

Next, when I cast my eyes, and see
That brave vibration, each way free,
O, how that glittering taketh me!
                Robert Herrick

A device which is not used to contribute to the poetic quality of the poem above is

1) a metaphor.
2) a simile.
3) rhyme.
4) onomatopoeia.

15. Which word describes the attitude of the speaker in "Upon Julia's Clothes"?

1) Hate
2) Envy
3) Admiration
4) Jealousy

16. Basically, Blake in "The Tiger" asks the following question.

1) Is there more good than evil?
2) Is there more evil than good?
3) Can something attractive be evil?
4) Are evil and good made by the same creator?

17. The repetition of the first stanza of "The Tiger" at the end is effective because

1) it ends with the emphasis on the enigmatic nature of the question.
2) it appeals to the reader's liking for the familiar.
3) it is the most musical of the stanzas.
4) it answers the question in the mind of the reader.

18. A dramatic monologue has all of the following characteristics except

1) one speaker.
2) identifiable but silent listener or listeners.
3) careful attention to setting, time, or relative antecedent action.
4) the organization of subject matter into several stanzas.

19. The speaker in "My Last Duchess" is

1) an emissary of the count.
2) the Duke of Ferrara.
3) the Duke's father-in-law.
4) a friar in the service of the Duke.

20. There is a difference between the kind of man the duke wishes to appear as and the kind of man he apparently is. This is an example of

1) irony.
2) paradox.
3) simile.
4) imagery.

21. "That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now; Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
'Frà Pandolf' by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,"

The use of rhyme in the lines above is particularly effective and interesting because

1) the end rhymes generally appear in the middle of the sentences and thereby create a tension.
2) the rhymes are all masculine and support the subject of the poem.
3) some of the rhymes are imperfect and increase the feeling of tension.
4) the rhyme scheme is aabbccdd.

22. Which of the following statements reveals a major weakness of the Duchess?

1) She was too extravagant.
2) She accepted everyone as essentially weak.
3) She failed to really know the Duke.
4) She constantly spread malicious gossip in the court.

23. The speaker in "Ulysses" is

1) Telemachus.
2) Ulysses.
3) one of the mariners.
4) the poet.

24. "Ulysses" is written in

1) a series of rhymed couplets.
2) the ballad stanza.
3) blank verse.
4) none of these.

25. "Experience is an arch" is an example of

1) simile.
2) personification.
3) metaphor.
4) metonymy.

26. In the line "To whom I leave the scepter and the isle," the underlined word is an example of

1) simile.
2) personification.
3) metaphor.
4) metonymy.

27. Which of the following described "Ulysses" least accurately?

1) It is a simple narrative of the accomplishments and expectations of Ulysses.
2) It presents Ulysses as a philosopher rather than an adventurer.
3) It pictures a great warrior who is not satisfied with a safe, quiet life with his wife and son.
4) It is a story of a man who had a great eagerness for life.

28. In "The Hollow Men," the speakers change from stanza to stanza. All of the statements below explain one or another of the changes except

1) the speaker is an "I" whose mood seems to be personal and subjectiv
2) The "hollow men" speak in chorus, identifying themselves and the subject of the poem.
3) the speakers, again in chorus, echo a note of encouragement, a hint of better days.
4) the speakers are no longer men, but mere gesture or ritual.

29. Just as the speakers change, the landscapes change. All of the statements below describe one or another of the landscapes presented in the poem except

1) the setting is dominated by a cactus, a "prickly pear."
2) the landscape is a combination of desert and fertile land where productive fruit trees grow.
3) one setting has grass and possibly other vegetation, but no garden.
4) one setting is a desert only, seen as it were in a darkening valley.

30. The variations of speakers and landscapes as employed by Eliot are particularly effective because

1) the changes in speakers and landscapes parallel each other.
2) the poet has the opportunity to introduce many images.
3) the reader enjoys the variety which such an arrangement allows.
4) none of these.

31. In addition to changes in speakers and landscapes, the central image in each stanza varies. These changes illustrate how a poet

1) can make the subject and the structure work together in support of each other.
2) uses his imagination to prevent monotony.
3) is controlled by considerations of form more than by considerations of subject.
4) uses the stanza form as the basic control.

32. The repetition of sounds and the broken lines are used by the poet to

1) attract the attention of his reader.
2) break the monotony of the lines.
3) help to convey a sense of mechanical recitation which characterizes the "hollow men."
4) shock his reader into the realization of life's futility.

33. The scant use of punctuation in "The Hollow Men" is effective because

1) the words and lines control the cadence.
2) the poet wanted to show that these "hollow men" were rebelling against accepted tradition.
3) punctuation marks frequently interfere with correct interpretation of poetry.
4) the poet apparently thought punctuation marks were not significant here or elsewhere.

34. The most significant defense for the use of rhyme in "The Hollow Men" is that

1) it satisfies the reader's liking for rhyme.
2) it reinforces the mood of the poem and unifies it.
3) it demonstrates the poet's controlled use of this poetic device.
4) none of these.

35. The central idea of the poem is that :

1) men have degenerated into spineless, unthinking, blind creatures.
2) man must act consciously and positively and must not be moved by fear.
3) man is basically no more worthy than other aspects of nature.
4) man is conquered by the forces of nature.